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ANOTHER BOOK

ABOUT

WESLEYAN METHODISM.





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‘ Ask for the good old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.’

*Jeremiah, c. 6, v. 16.*

‘ In general, do not mend our rules, but keep them.’

Rev. J. WESLEY.

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## PREFACE.

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SOME of my motives for compiling the following little work, were : 1st.—To rescue Wesleyan Methodism from those who appeared to be distorting and mutilating it. 2nd.—To place a brief outline of Wesleyan Methodism before those who were, in a great measure, ignorant of its character and design. 3rd.—To arrest the attention of all parties to whom it might apply, that they may be stirred up to the consideration and adoption at the present day, of Wesleyan Methodism in all its original simplicity.

In order to this, Christian prudence required that it all should be based upon the authority of those who have been eminent for their piety, their rank, and experience, and as known friends to Wesleyan Methodism, and who, on that account, had a peculiar right to declare those truths which might give greater offence were they to come from less respectable persons.

I have therefore made extracts from Wesley's Works, Fletcher's Works, Myles' Chronological History of the People called Methodists, The Life of Mr. W. Corvosso, Dr. Dixon's Life of Rev. Mr. Miller, The Centenary, &c. I have not referred to the particular pages from which I have taken them ; I thought it would probably interfere with the profitable reading of the work ; and also, that the reader might be led, by the omission, to peruse those excellent writings : being assured that if he should derive the same amount of benefit from doing so, as I have, he will have to praise the Lord with a grateful heart.

I have dwelt rather largely upon the Pastoral character and duty, because so much importance is attached to what is called 'pulpit preparations.' And much complaint has been made upon the subject of neglect in the duty of Pastoral visitation. And also, much has been said about the want of time to perform this branch of good old Methodism.

If any passages should appear to be too often repeated, the reader will please to excuse it, as having found them in the originals, I could not well omit them in the quotations.

Some of the admissions which I have taken the liberty of supposing the ministers to make, in their address to the seceders, in reference to some things

that have been said, are founded upon the authority of a little book sold at their book room ; 1852, written by Rev. James Kendall.

I think I have made a faithful transcript of the originals, and marked them in the usual way by inverted commas. I have not affixed my name to the book, because I am so far acquainted with the force of prejudice as to know that a very good man may say, ‘ Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? ’ Otherwise, I have no objection to publish my name.

If any good is accomplished by this humble attempt, I am quite sure that all the praise belongeth to Him who chooseth the weak and foolish things of the world.

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ANOTHER BOOK

ABOUT

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

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THERE have been great disputings and contentions about Wesleyan Methodism from the time of its commencement; there was a time when it was everywhere spoken against; and it is a question whether, upon inquiry, it may not be found to share the same fate now.

Multifarious are the notions respecting Wesleyan Methodism. Leaving out those who are always declared opponents to it, there are others who think Methodism has had its day, and is quite worn out; it might have passed off very well in Mr. Wesley's time, but that it will not be tolerated in this liberal and enlightened age, and therefore overturn it and form another system. Neither is the application of this notion confined merely to its polity, it takes with it, in a very material degree, its doctrines and spirit. Others say that it is not entirely bad, that it does not require to be totally abolished.

but repaired, some things removed, and others added. But as to what ought to be removed, and what retained, there is a great diversity of opinion. Again, others think that Methodism is a very excellent system, in every way adapted to accomplish the end proposed, and was successful when it existed, but that the glory is departed, and there remains but a dry, formal sect, possessing the name, but not the spirit, and that there is no Wesleyan Methodism to be seen in the present day. This, we rejoice to know, is a mistake, and it only remains for those who entertain such a thought, heartily to embrace all the privileges of Wesleyan Methodism, and manifest in their lives its spirit, happily to prove their error. A fourth party is heard to say, Methodism is in a very good state,—that no alteration whatever is required,—that it is working very well, and is in as great prosperity as it ever was. I would beg leave to say, that remains to be proved. Others say, Wesleyan Methodism is good, it is of God, it is not lost or worn out, but hidden, it is obscured, it is but little known, and consequently little understood; and as to mending it, no man has ever been able to mend it. Methodism has mended many thousands of men, making them holy, happy, and useful men, but no man will ever be able to mend it; and all that is required is to return to first principles in order to a revival; that God is equally willing to succeed the labours of his people as in the times of the early Methodists, and that the reason we do not see such success and signs following, is because the ministers are not faithful in the use of the means.

But what is this Wesleyan Methodism? I think many do not understand the meaning of the term, as



Mr. Wesley said in his day. ‘Perhaps’ (said he), ‘not one in a hundred of those who use the term methodist, have any idea of what it means. To ninety and nine of them it is still heathen Greek!’

There is nothing in it to court the embrace of an impenitent and ungodly world; and, if we have the rashness of forming a fictitious figure, dressing it up in a garb of our own imagination, and presenting it to the world as Wesleyan Methodism; or if we hide or obscure any of its essential characteristics, we at once do great injustice to Mr. Wesley, bring down God’s just displeasure, and expose ourselves to the contempt and ridicule of the sober-minded part of mankind, because of our inconsistency.

There is no necessity to mistake about it. Laying aside all controversy, let us hear what the founder says. Mr. Wesley, putting the question to himself, ‘Who is a Methodist according to your own account?’ says, ‘I answer,’

‘A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. One who loves his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is continually crying out, whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My God, and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. He is, therefore, happy in God, yea, always happy, as having in Him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, and overflowing his soul with peace and joy, perfect love; having now cast out fear, he rejoices evermore. He rejoices

in the Lord always, even in God, his Saviour, and in the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath now received the atonement. Having (found) redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins, he cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks back on the horrible pit out of which he is delivered; when he sees all his transgressions blotted out as a thick cloud. He cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is, being justified freely, and having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that believeth hath the witness (of this) in himself, being now a child of God by faith, because he is a son, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father! And the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward in hope of the glory that shall be revealed. Yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me. And he who hath this hope thus full of immortality, in every thing gives thanks; as knowing that this (whatsoever it is), is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him. From him, therefore, he cheerfully receives all, saying, Good is the will of the Lord! He prays without ceasing. It is given him always to pray, and not to faint. Not that he is always in the house of prayer, though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to

God, or calling upon Him in words. For many times the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered. But at all times the language of his heart is this, Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto Thee is my mouth, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto Thee.

‘ And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart: that he who loves God, loves his brother also. And he accordingly loves his neighbour as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of the Father of the spirits of all flesh. That a man is not personally known to him, is no bar to his love. No, nor that he is known to be such as he approves not, that he repays hatred for his goodwill. For he loves his enemies, yea, and the enemies of God: the evil and unthankful. And if it be not in his power to do good to them that hate him, yet he ceases not to pray for them, though they continue to spurn his love, and still despitefully use him and persecute him. For he is pure in heart. The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malignant affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention. And he hath now put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering: so that he forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel against any; even as God in Christ hath forgiven him. And, indeed, all possible ground for contention, on his part, is utterly cut off. For none

can take from him what he desires ; seeing he “ loveth not the world, nor any of the things of the world.” Agreeable to this, his one desire is the one design of his life, namely, not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. And the tree is known by its fruits. For as he loves God, so he keeps his commandments. All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might. By consequence, whatsoever he doth, it is all to the glory of God.

‘ Nor do the customs of the world at all hinder his running the race that is set before him. He knows that vice does not lose its nature, though it becomes ever so fashionable ; and remembers that every man is to give an account of himself to God. He cannot, therefore, ever follow a multitude to do evil. He cannot fare sumptuously every day, or make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. He cannot lay up treasures upon earth, no more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot adorn himself (on any pretence) with gold or costly apparel. He cannot join in or countenance any diversion which has the least tendency to vice of any kind. He cannot speak evil of his neighbour, no more than he can lie, either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one ; for love keeps the door of his lips, As he has time he does good unto all men ; unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. And that in every possible kind, not only to their bodies, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick, or in prison, but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth.

‘ These are the principles and practice of our sect ;

these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do those who are in derision, so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity! Thou hast said: so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity. The plain old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things), he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and all true holiness. And, having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked. By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labour to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world; from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all; not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet obtained. No; whosoever doth the will of my Father who is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in nowise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with

thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough; I give thee the right hand of fellowship. If there be any consolation in Christ; if any comfort of love; if any fellowship of the Spirit; if any bowels and mercies, let us strive together for the faith of the Gospel; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness; with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Remembering, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called, with one hope of our calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

In his advice to the people called Methodists, he says, 'It may be needful to specify whom I mean by this ambiguous term; since it would be lost labour to speak to Methodists, so called, without first describing those to whom I speak.

'By Methodists, I mean a people who profess to pursue (in whatever measure they have attained), holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God; who place religion in an uniform resemblance of the great object of it; in a steady imitation of Him they worship, in all his imitable perfections, more particularly in justice, mercy, and truth, or universal love, filling the heart and governing the life. You to whom I now speak, believe this love of human kind cannot spring but from the love of God. You think there can be no instance of one whose tender affection

embraces every child of man (though not endeared to him either by ties of blood, or by any natural or civil relation), unless that affection flows from a grateful filial love to the common Father of all; to God, considered not only as his Father, but as the Father of the spirits of all flesh; yea, as the general parent and friend of all the families, both of heaven and earth. This filial love you suppose to flow only from faith, which you describe as a supernatural evidence (or conviction) of things not seen; so that to him who has this principle,

‘ The things unknown to feeble sense,  
 Unseen by Reason’s glimm’ring ray;  
 With strong commanding evidence,  
 Their heav’nly origin display.  
 Faith lends its realising light,  
 The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;  
 Th’ invisible appears in sight,  
 And God is seen by mortal eye.’

‘ You suppose this faith to imply an evidence that God is merciful to me a sinner; that He is reconciled to me by the death of His Son, and now accepts me for His sake. You accordingly describe the faith of a real Christian, as “a sure trust and confidence (over and above his assent to the sacred writings), which he hath in God, that his sins are forgiven; and that he is, through the merits of Christ, reconciled to the favour of God.” You believe, farther, that both this faith and love are wrought in us by the Spirit of God; nay, that there cannot be in any man, one good temper or desire, or so much as one good thought, unless it be produced by the Almighty power of God, by the inspiration or influence of the Holy Spirit.



‘ If you walk by this rule, continually endeavouring to know, and love, and resemble, and obey the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of love, of pardoning mercy. If from this principle of loving obedient faith, you carefully abstain from all evil, and labour, as you have opportunity, to do good to all men, friends or enemies ; if, lastly, you unite together, to encourage and help each other, in thus working out your salvation, and for that end watch over one another in love, you are they whom I mean by Methodists.

Again, he says, on laying the foundation of the new chapel, City-road : ‘ What is Methodism ? what does this new word mean ? Is it not a new religion ? This is a very common, nay, almost an universal supposition ; but nothing can be more remote from the truth. It is a mistake all over. Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the Primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England. This old religion (as I observed in the earnest appeal to men of reason and religion) is no other than love, the love of God and all mankind ; the loving God with all our hearts, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the foundation of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy ; and the loving every soul which God has made, every man on earth as our own soul. This love is the great medicine of life, the never failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God, and, at the same time, a peace that passeth all understanding, with joy un-



unspeakable, and full of glory. This religion of love, and joy, and peace, has its seat in the inmost soul, but is ever shewing itself by its fruits, continually springing up, not only in all innocence (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour), but, likewise, in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.

‘ This is the religion of the Bible, as no one can deny, who reads it with any attention. It is the religion which is continually inculcated therein, which runs through both the Old and New Testament. Moses and the Prophets, our blessed Lord and his Apostles, proclaimed with one voice, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself.” The Bible declares, “ Love is the fulfilling of the law,” the end of the commandment, of all the commandments which are contained in the oracles of God. The inward and outward fruits of this love are also largely described by the inspired writers; so that whosoever allows the Scriptures to be the word of God, must allow this to be true religion.

‘ Your principles are new,’ (says Mr. Wesley, in another place,) ‘ in this respect, that there is no other set of people among us, and possibly not in the Christian world, who hold them all, in the same degree and connexion; who so strenuously and continually insist on the absolute necessity of universal holiness, both in heart and life; of a peaceful, joyous love to God; of a supernatural evidence of things not seen; of an inward witness that we are the children of God; and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to any good thought, or word, or work. Your strictness of life, taking the whole of it

together, may likewise be accounted new. I mean your making it a rule, to abstain from fashionable diversions, from reading plays, romances, or books of humour, from singing innocent songs, or talking in merry, gay, diverting manner; your plainness of dress; your manner of dealing; your exactness in observing the Lord's-day; your scrupulosity as to things that have not paid custom; your total abstinence from spirituous liquors, unless in cases of extreme necessity; your rule not to mention the fault of an absent person; in particular of ministers, or of those in authority, may justly be termed new. Seeing although some are scrupulous in some of these things, and others are strict with regard to other particulars, yet we do not find any body of people, who insist on all these rules together; with respect, therefore, both to your name, principles, and practice, you may be considered a new people.

As to doctrine, some say "their doctrine is too strict. They make the way to heaven too narrow." And this is in truth the original objection, and is secretly at the bottom of a thousand more, which appear in various forms. But do they make the way to heaven any narrower, than our Lord and his Apostles make it? Is their doctrine stricter than that of the Bible? Consider only a few plain texts. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." "For every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." If their doctrine is stricter than this, they are to blame. But you know, in your conscience, it is not. And who can be one jot less strict, without corrupting the word

of God? Can any steward of the mysteries of God be found faithful, if he change any part of that sacred Depositum? No. He can abate nothing, he can soften nothing. He is constrained to declare to all men, I may not bring down the Scripture to your taste. You must come up to it, or perish for ever.

‘This is the real ground of that other popular cry, concerning “the uncharitableness of these men.” Uncharitable are they. In what respect? Do they not feed the hungry, and clothe the naked? No; that is not the thing. They are not wanting in this. But they are so uncharitable in judging. They think none can be saved, but those of their own way. They damn all the world beside themselves.

‘What do you mean? “They think none can be saved, but those of their own way.” Most surely they do. For as there is but one heaven, so there is but one way to it; even the way of faith in Christ (for we speak not of opinions, or outward modes of worship), the way of love to God and man, the highway of holiness. And is it uncharitable to think or say, that none can be saved, but those who walk in this way? Was He then uncharitable who declared, “He that believeth not shall be damned?” Or he that said, “Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?” And again: “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, yet, if I have not charity, love, all this profiteth me nothing.” But they damn all, you say, beside themselves. Damn all! What kind of word is this? They damn no man. None is able to damn any man, but the Lord and Judge of all. What you probably mean by that strange expression is, they declare that God condemns

all, beside those who believe in Jesus Christ, and love Him, and keep His commandments. And so must you also, or you sin against God, and your neighbour, and your own soul. But is there any uncharitableness in this? In warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come? On the contrary, not to warn a poor, blind, stupid wretch, that he is hanging over the mouth of hell, would be so inexcusable a want of charity, as would bring his blood upon our heads.

‘Some object to the Methodist preachers as unlearned men. This is another grievous offence. The ground of this offence is partly true. Some of those who preach are unlearned. They neither understand the ancient languages, nor any of the branches of philosophy. And yet this objection might have been spared, by many of those who have frequently made it, because they are unlearned too (though accounted otherwise). They have not themselves the very thing they require in others.

‘And I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered men have help from God, for that great work, the saving souls from death, seeing He hath enabled, and doth enable them still to turn many to righteousness. Thus hath He “destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to naught the understanding of the prudent.” When they imagined they had effectually shut the door, and locked up every passage, whereby any help would come to two or three preachers, weak in body as well as soul; who they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time; when they had gained their point, by securing (as they supposed) all the men of learning in the nation, He that sitteth in the heaven laughed them to scorn, and came

upon them by a way they thought not of. Out of the stones He raised up those who should beget children to Abraham. We had no more foresight of this than you. Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it, until we could not but own that God gave wisdom from above to those unlearned and ignorant men, so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hands, and sinners were daily converted to God.

‘ Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental Divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love) are able to do.

‘ It will easily be observed, that I do not depreciate learning of any kind. The knowledge of the languages is a valuable talent ; so is the knowledge of the arts and sciences. Both one and the other may be employed to the glory of God, and the good of men. But yet I ask, where hath God declared in His word, that he cannot, or will not make use of men that have it not ? Has Moses, or any of the prophets, affirmed this ? Or our Lord ? Or any of his Apostles ? You are sensible all these are against you. You know the Apostles themselves, all except St. Paul, were common, unphilosophical, unlettered men.

Again, Mr. Wesley says, in reference to the Methodists, ‘ You are a low, insignificant people, without riches, for you are poor almost to a man, having no more than the plain necessities of life, and without any extraordinary gifts of nature, or the advantages

of education ; most even of your teachers, being quite unlearned, and, in other things, ignorant men.'

The few following extracts, from the writings of Mr Wesley, may be sufficient to show what were the doctrines and sentiments of Wesleyan Methodism :—

' Never did every sin appear in the conversation of the vilest wretch that ever lived. But look into thy nature, and thou mayest see all and every sin in the root thereof. There is a fulness of all unrighteousness there ; atheism, idolatry, murder. Perhaps none of these appear to thee in thy heart ; but there is more in this unfathomable depth of wickedness than thou knowest. You may observe three things in the corrupt heart ; first, there is the corrupt nature, the evil bent of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. Secondly, there are particular lusts or dispositions of that corrupt nature, such as pride, passion, covetousness. Thirdly, there is one of these stronger than all the rest,—the sin which doeth so easily beset us. The state of a natural man, the Scripture represents as a state of death. The voice of God to him is, Awake thou that sleepest. For his soul is in a deep sleep. His spiritual senses are not awake : they discern neither spiritual good nor evil. And, because he is fast asleep, he is, in some sense, at rest. Because he is blind, he is also secure. He sees not that he stands on the edge of the pit ; therefore he fears it not. He cannot tremble at the danger he does not know. He has not understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no dread of God ? Because he is totally ignorant of Him. He is secure, because he is utterly

ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of ‘repenting by and by;’ he does not indeed exactly know when; but some time or other before he dies: taking it for granted, that this is quite in his own power. From the same ignorance of himself and God, there may sometimes arise in the natural man a kind of joy, in congratulating himself upon his own wisdom and goodness, and what the world calls joy, he may often possess; for indeed this is the sum of worldly happiness, to dress, and visit, and talk, and eat and drink, and rise up to play. All this time he is the servant of sin. He commits sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled; he is in no bondage (as some speak); he feels no condemnation. He contents himself (even though he should profess to believe that the Christian revelation is of God) with man is frail, we are all weak. Every man has his infirmity. Perhaps he quotes Scripture. Why, does not Solomon say, The righteous man falls into sin seven times a-day? And doubtless, they are all hypocrites or enthusiasts, who pretend to be better than their neighbours. If at any time a serious thought fix upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible, with, Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners? Thus he remains a willing servant of sin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering sin, but not striving to conquer, particularly that sin which doth so easily beset him.

‘Such is the state of every natural man, whether he be a gross, scandalous transgressor, or a more reputable



and decent sinner, having the form, though not the power, of godliness.

‘ Wherefore, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead. God calleth thee now by my mouth; and bids thee know thyself, thou fallen, spirit, thy true state and only concern below, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Call upon thy God, if so be thy God will think upon thee, that thou perish not. A mighty tempest is stirred up around about thee, and thou art sinking into the depths of perdition, the gulph of God’s judgments. If thou wouldest escape them, cast thyself into them. Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be judged of the Lord.

‘ Awake, awake! Stand up this moment, lest thou drink at the Lord’s hand the cup of His fury. Stir up thyself to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy righteousness, mighty to save! Shake thyself from the dust. At least, let the earthquake of God’s threatenings shake thee. Awake, and cry out with the trembling gaoler, What must I do to be saved? And never rest, till thou believest on the Lord Jesus, with a faith which is His gift, by the operation of his spirit. Awake, thou everlasting spirit, out of the dream of worldly happiness. Did not God create thee for himself? Then, thou canst not rest, till thou rest in Him. Return, thou wanderer. Fly back to thy ark. This is not thy home. Think not of building tabernacles here. Thou art but a stranger, a sojourner upon earth. A creature of a day, but just launching out into an unchangeable state. Make haste. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends upon this moment. An eternity of happiness, or an eternity of misery.

‘ The covenant of works required, of Adam and all his



children, to pay the price themselves, in consideration of which, they were to have all the future blessings of God. But in the covenant of grace, seeing we have nothing to pay, God frankly forgives us all, provided only, that we believe in Him, who hath paid the price for us ; who hath given himself a propitiation for our sins, for the sins of the whole world.

‘ Thus the first covenant required what is now afar off from all the children of men ; namely, unsinning obedience, which is far from those who are conceived and born in sin. Whereas the second requires what is nigh at hand, as though it should say, Thou art sin ; God is love. Thou by sin art fallen short of the glory of God ; yet there is mercy with Him. Bring then all thy sins to the pardoning God, and they shall vanish away as a cloud. If thou were not ungodly, there would be no room for Him to justify thee as ungodly. But now draw near, in full assurance of faith. He speaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe ; for even the just God justifieth all that believe in Jesus.

‘ Every part of the moral law must remain in force, upon all mankind, and in all ages, as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change ; but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.

‘ There is the closest connexion that can be conceived, between the law and the Gospel. On the one hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to the Gospel : on the other, the Gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law, for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbour,

to be meek, humble or holy. We feel we are not sufficient for these things; yea, that with man this is impossible. But we see a promise of God, to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek, and holy. We lay hold of this Gospel, of these glad tidings: it is done unto us according to our faith. And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

‘ Christian faith is then, not only assent to the whole Gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbancy upon Him as our atonement and our life; as given for us and living in us; and, in consequence thereof, a closing with Him, and cleaving to Him, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

‘ But in what sense is this righteousness (of Christ) imputed to believers? In this. All believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of anything in them, or done by them, of their own righteousness or works. Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy He saved us. By grace are ye saved through faith. Not of works, lest any man should boast: but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us, we are justified freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And this is not only the means of our obtaining the favour of God, but of continuing therein. It is thus we come

to God at first; it is by the same we come unto Him ever after. We walk in the one and the same new and living way, till our spirit returns to God.

‘ Those who are sick, the burden of whose sins is intolerable, are they that need a physician; those who are guilty, who groan under the wrath of God, are they that need a pardon. Those who are condemned already, not only by God, but also by their own consciences, as by a thousand witnesses of all their ungodliness, both in thought, word, and work, cry aloud for Him that justifieth the ungodly, through the redemption that is in Jesus: the ungodly and him that worketh not, that worketh not before he is justified; anything that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his heart is necessarily, essentially evil, till the love of God is shed abroad therein. And while the tree is corrupt, so are the fruits; for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

‘ Justifying faith implies not only a divine wisdom or conviction, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*. And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-headed, God justifieth that ungodly one. God, for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and absolveth him who had in him till then no good thing. Repentance indeed God had given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath, or doth from that hour, when he first believes in God, through Christ, faith does not find but bring. This is the fruit of faith. First the tree is

good, and then the fruit is good also. He hath no righteousness at all, antecedent to this, not so much as negative righteousness or innocence. But faith is imputed to him for righteousness, the very moment he believeth.<sup>4</sup> Not that God thinketh him to be what he is not. But as he made Christ to be sin for us, that is, treated him as a sinner, punishing Him for our sins, so He counteth us righteous from the time we believe in Him, that is, He doth not punish us for our sins, yea, treats us as though we were guiltless and righteous.

‘ It was therefore an instance of wisdom worthy of a God, to appoint such a condition of reconciliation, for him and all his posterity, as might effectually humble, might abase them to the dust. And such is faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this end. For he that cometh unto God by this faith, must fix his eye simply on his own wickedness, on his guilt and helplessness, without having the least regard to any supposed good in himself, to any virtue or righteousness whatsoever. He must come as a mere sinner inwardly and outwardly, self-destroyed and self-condemned, bringing nothing to God but ungodliness only, pleading nothing of his own but sin and misery. Thus it is, and thus alone, when his mouth is stopped, and he stands utterly guilty before God, that he can look unto Jesus, as the whole and sole propitiation for his sins. Thus only can he be found in Him, and receive the righteousness which is of God by faith.

• The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. And from the time we are accepted through the Beloved, reconciled to God through His blood, He loves and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.

‘ Both these gifts of God are given to every believer in one and the same moment. In one point of time his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children. By the latter, our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image of God. The one is, the taking away the guilt, the other, the taking away the power of sin.

‘ Thus it is, that, in the children of God, repentance and faith exactly answer each other. By repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions. By faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands. By repentance we are still sensible we deserve punishment for our tempers, words and actions. By faith we are conscious that our Advocate with the Father, is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction, that there is no help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but grace to help in every time of need. Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we stand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and in earth. Repentance says, without Him I can do nothing. Faith says, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. Through Him I can not only overcome, but expel all the enemies of my soul, through Him I can love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength; yea, and walk in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my life.

‘ Those who are thus, by faith, born of God, have also

strong consolation through hope : even the testimony of their own spirit, with the Spirit which witnesseth in their hearts, that they are the children of God. Indeed, it is the same Spirit who works in them that clear and cheerful confidence, that their heart is upright toward God ; that good assurance that they now do, through his grace, the things which are acceptable in his sight ; that they are now in the path which leads to life, and shall, by the mercy of God, endure therein to the end. It is He who giveth them a lively expectation of receiving all good things at God's hands ; a Christian is kept steady in the midst of the waves of this troublesome world, and preserved from striking upon either of those fatal rocks, presumption, or despair.

‘ Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandments. Very excellent things are spoken of love ; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great commandment, but it is all the commandments in one.

‘ The royal law of heaven and earth is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

‘ One thing shall ye desire for its own sake, the fruition of Him that is All in All. One happiness will ye propose to your souls, even an union with Him that made them : the having fellowship with the Father and the Son ; the being joined to the Lord in one spirit. One design you are to pursue to the end of time, the enjoyment of God in time and in eternity. Desire other things so far as they tend to this. Love the creature as it leads to the Creator. But in every step you take, be this the glorious point that terminates your

view. Let every affection, and thought, and word, and work, be subordinate to this. Whatever ye desire or fear, whatever ye seek or shun, whatever ye think, speak, or do, be it in order to your happiness in God, the sole end as well as the source of your being.

Very excellent things are spoken of faith, and whosoever is a partaker thereof, may well say, with the Apostle, Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. Yet still it loses all its excellence, when brought into comparison with love. Let those who magnify faith beyond all proportion, so as to swallow up all things else, and who so totally misapprehend the nature of it, as to imagine it stands in the place of love, consider further. That as love will exist after faith, so it did exist long before it. Love existed from eternity in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation. They received at once from their gracious Creator, to exist and to love. And it was only when love was lost by sin, that faith was added, not for its own sake, nor with any design, that it should exist any longer, than until it had answered the end for which it was ordained, namely, to restore man to the love from which he had fallen. At the fall therefore was added this evidence of things not seen, which before was utterly needless: this confidence in redeeming love, which could not possibly have any place, till the promise was made, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Faith then was originally designed of God, to establish the law of love. Therefore in speaking thus, we are not undervaluing it or robbing it of its due praise; but, on the contrary, showing its real worth, exalting it in its just proportion, and giving it that very place which the



wisdom of God assigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of restoring that holy love, wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself (as neither is any other means whatsoever), yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts, and as, in the present state of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it; it is, on that account, an unspeakable blessing to man, and of unspeakable value before God.

‘ To do no harm, to do good, to attend all the ordinances of God (the righteousness of a Pharisee), are all external. Whereas, on the contrary, poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the love of our neighbour, and purity of heart (the righteousness of a Christian), are all internal. And even peace-making (or doing good) and suffering for righteousness sake, stand entitled to the blessings annexed to them, only as they imply these inward dispositions, as they spring from, exercise, and confirm them. So that whereas the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was external only, it may be said, in some sense, that the righteousness of a Christian is internal only. All his actions and sufferings being as nothing in themselves, being estimated before God only, by the tempers from which they spring.

‘ Perhaps the general prejudice against Christian perfection, may chiefly arise from a misapprehension of the nature of it. We willingly allow, and continually declare, there is no such perfection in this life as implies either a dispensation from doing good, and attending all the ordinances of God, or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities neces-



sarily connected with flesh and blood. First, we not only allow, but earnestly contend, that there is no perfection in this life which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God, or from doing good unto all men, while we have time; though especially unto the household of faith. We believe that not only the babes in Christ, who have newly found redemption in his blood, but those who are grown up into perfect men, are indispensably obliged, as often as they have opportunity, to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him, and to search the scriptures; by fasting, as well as temperance, to keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection; and, above all, to pour out their souls in prayer, both secretly, and in the great congregation. We secondly believe, that there is no such perfection in this life as implies an entire deliverance either from ignorance or mistake in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations, or from numberless infirmities wherewith the corruptible body more or less presses down the soul. We cannot find any ground in scripture to suppose that any inhabitant of a house of clay, is wholly exempt, either from bodily infirmities or from ignorance of many things; or to imagine any is incapable of mistake, or falling into divers temptations. But whom, then, do you mean by one that is perfect? We mean one in whom is the mind which was in Christ, and whoso walketh as Christ also walked; and that hath clean hands and a pure heart, or that is cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; one in whom is no occasion of stumbling, and who, accordingly, doth not commit sin. To declare this a little more particularly, we understand, by that scriptural expression, a perfect man, one in whom God has fulfilled his faithful word:

from all your filthiness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses. We understand, hereby, one whom God has sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit; one who walketh in the light, as He is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, having cleansed him from all sin. 'This man can now testify to all mankind, I am now crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me. He is holy as God who called him is holy, both in heart and all manner of conversation. He loveth the Lord God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength. He loveth his neighbour, every man as himself; yea, as Christ loveth us; them in particular that despitefully use him and persecute him, because they know not the Son, neither the Father. Indeed, his soul is all love, filled with bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering. And his life agreeth thereto, full of the works of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love; and whatsoever he doeth, either in word or deed, he doeth it all in the name, in the love and power of the Lord Jesus. In a word, he doeth the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. This is to be a perfect man, to be sanctified throughout; even to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God (to use Archbishop Usher's words), as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Christ. In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands, to show forth His praise, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

'The Bible is a lantern to a Christian's feet, and a light in all his paths. This alone he receives as his

rule of right or wrong, of whatsoever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good, but what is here enjoined, either directly, or by plain consequence. He accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in plain terms, or by undeniable inference. Whatever the scriptures neither forbids nor enjoins (either directly, or by plain consequence), he believes to be of an indifferent nature, to be in itself neither good nor evil. This being the whole and sole outward rule, whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things.

‘ And as to the use of means. Before you use any means, let it be deeply impressed upon your soul there is no power in this. It is in itself a poor, dead, empty thing. Separate from God, it is a dry leaf, a shadow. Neither is there any merit in my using this; nothing intrinsically pleasing to God; nothing whereby I deserve any favour at his hands; no, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. But because God bids, therefore I do; because He directs me to wait in his way, therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my salvation.

‘ Settle this in your heart, that the mere work profiteth nothing. That there is no power to save, but in the spirit of God; no merit but in the blood of Christ. That, consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in Him alone. On the other hand, he that do truly trust in Him, cannot fall short of the grace of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were shut up in the centre of the earth. In using all means, seek God alone. In and through every outward thing, look singly to the power of his Spirit, and the merits of his Son. Beware you do not stick in the work itself; if you

do, it is all lost labour. Nothing short of God can satisfy your soul. Therefore, eye him in all, through all, and above all. Remember also, to use all means as means. As ordained, not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your souls in righteousness and true holiness. If, therefore, they actually tend to this, well; but if not, they are dung and dross. After you have used any of these, take care how you value yourself thereon. How you congratulate yourself as having done some great thing. This is turning all into poison. Think, if God was not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding sin to sin? How long, O Lord! save, or I perish! O lay not this sin to my charge. If God was there, if his love flowed into your heart, you have forgot, as it were, the outward work. You see, you know, you feel God is all in all. Be abased. Sink down before him. Give Him all the praise.

‘ All Christians should be united in love. Although a difference in opinions or modes of worship, may prevent an entire external union, need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another, in love, and good works.

‘ I dare not therefore presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive, and apostolical. But my belief is no rule for another. I ask not therefore of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my Church? Of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government,

and allow the same church-offices with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? &c.

‘ I have no desire to dispute with you one moment, upon any of these preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight. If thine heart is as my heart—if thou lovest God, and all mankind, I ask no more—give me thine hand.

‘ Judge not one another ; but every man look into his own bosom. How stands the matter in your own breast? Examine your conscience before God. Are you a happy partaker of this scriptural, this truly primitive religion? Are you a witness of the religion of love? Are you a lover of God and all mankind? Does your heart glow with gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift? The Father of the spirits of all flesh, who giveth you life, and breath, and all things? Who hath given you his Son, his only Son, that you might not perish, but have everlasting life. Is your soul warm with benevolence to all mankind? Do you long to have all men virtuous and happy? And does the constant tenour of your life and conversation bear witness to this? Do you love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth? Do you persevere in this work of faith and labour of love? Do you walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us? Do you, as you have time, do good unto all men? And in as high a degree as you are able? Whosoever thus doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, said Jesus, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. Whosoever thou art, whose heart is herein as my heart, give me thine hand. Come, and let us magnify the Lord together, and labour

to promote his kingdom upon earth. Let us join hearts and hands in this blessed work, in striving to bring glory to God in the highest, by establishing peace and goodwill among men, to the uttermost of our power. First let our hearts be joined herein: let us unite our wishes and prayers. Let our whole soul pant after a general revival of pure religion and undefiled, the restoration of the image of God, pure love, in every child of man. Then let us endeavour to promote, in our several stations, this scriptural, primitive religion: let us with all diligence, diffuse the religion of love among all we have any intercourse with: let us provoke all men, not to enmity and contention, but to love and good works: always remembering those deep words (God engrave them on all our hearts), "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Such is part of Mr. Wesley's definition of the terms Methodist, and Methodism, and description of the spirit and character of the same. And such were the principles which he and his faithful fellow-labourers endeavoured to spread through the world, with all their might.

Mr. Wesley with honest simplicity relates his own conversion. When earnestly seeking salvation, he speaks thus:—"O let no one deceive us by vain words as if we had already attained this faith! By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost? Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God? Alas, with mine he does not. O thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in anything but thee. Draw us after thee. Let us be emptied of ourselves

and fill us with all peace and joy in believing; and let nothing separate us from thy love in time or eternity.'

'His prayer was heard. On Wednesday evening, says he, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

'I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitely used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. Mr. Charles Wesley had received the blessing of pardon a little time before this.

'From this time the two brothers were new men. A sensible application of the blood of Christ to their consciences rendered them cheerful and happy, and produced in their hearts an intense love to their Saviour. Before this period they served God because they feared Him; now they loved Him from a joyous assurance that He had first loved Him. They confessed that up to this period they had been mere servants of God; now they stood in a filial relation to Him; and because they were sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." They had laboured with all fidelity to benefit mankind, because they felt this to be their duty; but now the love of Christ kindled in their breasts a generous and



yearning affection for the whole human race, and a willingness to lay down their lives, if others might only be converted and saved.

‘ The principles by which Mr. Wesley was guided in the formation of his theological views, and the manner in which he endeavoured to teach mankind, he has distinctly stated in the incomparable preface to his sermons, which he first published in the year 1746. I design plain truth, says he, for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculation, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not used in common life; and, in particular, those kind of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity, those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which, to common people, are an unknown tongue.

‘ To candid and reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit. come from God, and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing, the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came down from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here then I am, far



from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone. Only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights, 'Lord, is it not thy words, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally, and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, If any man be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do, let me know thy will.' I then search after, and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby being dead they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

'With respect to the right manner of preaching, he thus speaks in his notes on our Lord's sermon on the Mount:—"Through this whole discourse we cannot but observe the most exact method which can possibly be conceived. Every paragraph, every sentence, is closely connected with that which precedes, and that which follows it. And is not this the pattern to every Christian preacher? If any, then, are able to follow it without any premeditation well; if not, let them not dare to preach without it. No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, comes from the Spirit of Christ." God himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and the manner. If any man speak in the name of God, let him speak as the oracles of God; and if he would imitate any part of these above the rest, let it be the first Epistle of St.

John. This is the style, the most excellent style, for every Gospel preacher. And let him aim at no more ornament than he finds in that sentence, which is the sum of the whole Gospel, 'We love Him, because He first loved us.'

'The Messrs. Wesley engaged in the duties of the ministry under a deep sense of their responsibility both to God and man, and left all self-display and artificial modes of address to the vain men who seek their reward in popular admiration.'

Mr. Wesley, giving an account of the means used and the success that followed, says, 'We went forth to seek that which was lost (more eminently lost), to call forth the most flagrant, hardened, desperate sinners to repentance. To this end we preached in the Horse-fair at Bristol, in Kingswood, in Newcastle, among the colliers in Staffordshire, and the tanners in Cornwall; in Southwark, Wapping, Moorfields, Drury-lane, at London. Did any man ever pick out such places as these, in order to find serious, regular, well-disposed people? How many such might then be in any of them I know not. But this I know, that four in five of those who are now with us, were not of that number, but were wallowing in their blood, till God by us said unto them live.

'Now, let any man inquire at Rhode, Bradford, Wraxall, or among the colliers of Colefield, 1st. What kind of people were those, before they followed these men? 2nd. What are the main doctrines they have been teaching for this twelvemonth? 3rd. What effect have these doctrines upon their followers? What manner of lives do they lead now? And if you do not find, 1st, that three in four of these were two years ago notoriously wicked men; 2nd, that the main doctrines they have

heard since, were, love God and your neighbour, and carefully keep his commandments? and, 3rd, that they have since exercised themselves herein, and continue so to do; I say, if you or any reasonable man, who will be at the pains to inquire, does not find this to be an unquestionable fact, I will openly acknowledge myself an enthusiast, or whatever else you shall please to style me.

‘ Just at the time when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance. Many thousands gathered to hear them; and, in every place where they came, many began to show such a concern for religion, as they never had done before. Many in a short time were deeply convinced of the number and heinousness of their sins, of their evil tempers, of their inability to help themselves, and of the insignificancy of their outside religion. And from this repentance sprang fruits meet for repentance; the whole form of their lives was changed. They ceased to do evil, and learned to do well. Neither was this all; but over and above this outward change, they began to experience inward religion. The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, which they enjoy to this day. They love Him, because He first loved us, and this love constrains them to love all mankind, and inspires them with every holy and heavenly temper, with the mind which was in Christ. Hence it is, that they are now uniform in their behaviour, unblameable in all manner of conversation, and in whatsoever state they are, they have learned therewith to be content. Thus they calmly travel on through life, never repining, or murmuring, or dissatisfied, till the hour comes, that they

shall drop this covering of earth, and return to the Father of spirits.

This revival of religion has spread to such a degree, as neither we nor our fathers had known. How extensive has it been! There is scarce a considerable town in the kingdom, where some have not been made witnesses of it. It has spread to every age and sex, to most orders and degrees of men; and even to abundance of those who, in time past, were accounted monsters of wickedness.

‘Consider the swiftness as well as the extent of it. In what age has such a number of sinners been recovered in so short a time from the errors of their ways! When has true religion, I will not say since the Reformation, but since the time of Constantine the Great, made so large a progress in any nation, within so small a space? I believe, hardly can either ancient or modern history afford a parallel instance.

‘We may likewise observe the depth of the work so extensively and swiftly wrought. Multitudes have been thoroughly convinced of sin, and shortly after, so filled with joy and love, that whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could hardly tell. And in the power of this love, they have trampled under foot whatever the world accounts either terrible or desirable; having evidenced, in the severest trials, an invariable and tender good-will to mankind, and all the fruits of holiness. Now, so deep a repentance, so strong a faith, such fervent love, and such unblemished holiness, wrought in so many persons in so short a time, the world has not seen for many years.

‘But if these things are so, may we not well say,

“What hath God wrought?” For such a work, if we consider the extensiveness of it, the swiftness with which it has spread, the depth of the religion so swiftly diffused, and its purity from all corrupt mixtures, we must acknowledge, cannot easily be paralleled, in all these concurrent circumstances, by anything that is found in the English annals since Christianity was first planted in this island.

‘Such a work as this hath been, in many respects, as neither we nor our fathers had known. Not a few whose sins were of the most flagrant kind, drunkards, swearers, thieves, whoremongers, adulterers, have been brought from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God. Many of these were rooted in their wickedness, having long gloried in their shame, perhaps for a course of many years, yea, even to hoary hairs. Many had not so much as a notional faith, being Jews, Arians, Deists, or Atheists. Nor has God only made bare his arm in these last days, in behalf of open publicans and sinners, but many of the Pharisees also have believed on Him, of the righteous that need no repentance, and having received the sentence of death in themselves, have then heard the voice that raiseth the dead; have been made partakers of an inward vital religion, even righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

‘The manner wherein God hath wrought this work, is as strange as the work itself. In many souls it has generally, if not always, been wrought in one moment. As the lightning shining from heaven, so was the coming of the Son of man, either to bring peace or a sword; either to wound or heal; either to convince of sin, or to give remission of sins in his blood. And the

other circumstances attending it have been equally remote from what human wisdom would have expected. So true is that word, "my ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts as your thoughts."

'These extraordinary circumstances seem to have been designed by God for the further manifestation of his work; to cause his power to be known, and to awaken the attention of a drowsy world. And yet even from these, some have drawn their grand objection against the whole work. We never saw it, say they, on this fashion. Therefore, the work is not of God.'

All this revival of pure religion, in a great measure, under God, may be attributed to field preaching, or open-air preaching, as Mr. Jackson calls it, which Mr. Wesley adopted, and so extensively practised. 'Having once adopted this mode of imparting religious instruction to the neglected classes of the community, he never abandoned it to the end of his life, being deeply convinced of its utility, and strenuously recommending the frequent use of it to all the preachers who laboured in connection with him. For many years, he thus addressed large multitudes of willing and attentive hearers in various parts of the United Kingdoms. The preachers were required to visit, in rotation, the several towns, villages, and other hamlets which were committed to their care, usually preaching every evening, at least, during the week; teaching also from house to house, visiting the sick, meeting the societies, and everywhere maintaining the discipline to which the whole body was pledged.'

This leads to a more particular consideration of the machinery of Methodism, the formation of conference, duty of preachers, &c.

What an evidence is the existence of conference that

God gave special understanding to his faithful servant, John Wesley; what can be more consistent with scripture, with reason, and with experience, for the stability of doctrine and discipline? Can there be any plan more scriptural for the regulation of the preachers as to duty, &c. than that established by the conference? They are all brethren, all equal in dignity, none to usurp the Church of God. What a deeply interesting assembly; how momentous their work; how noble, yet how responsible their position! They are come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty; to co-operate with him in the conversion of the world. O! what manner of men ought they to be in all holy conversation and godliness; there must be no wrangling, no party spirit; no master but Christ. He is the head, ye are brethren; there must not be the semblance of dissimulation, no undue partiality, but the eye must be single, then the whole body will be full of light. Their souls clothed with humility, and their hearts filled with the love of Christ; then they will submit themselves to one another, and be fitted instruments in the hands of the Lord to go forth to their several circuits with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. That such is the design and spirit of a truly constituted Wesleyan Methodist Conference may be seen by reviewing the deliberations and arrangements of the early conferences.

The following is Mr. Wesley's introduction to the first conference, 1744:—‘It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God. That we meet with a single eye, and as little children, who have every thing to learn. That every point that is proposed, may be examined to the foundation. That every



person may speak freely whatever is in his heart. And that every question which may arise, should be thoroughly debated and settled. Need we be fearful of doing this? What are we afraid of? Of over-turning our first principles? If they are false, the sooner they are over-turned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination. Let us all pray for a willingness to receive light, to know of every doctrine whether it be of God. How may the time of this conference be made more eminently a time of watching unto prayer? First, while we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us. Second, in the intermediate hours, let us visit none but the sick, and spend all the time that remains in retirement. Third, let us therein give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing upon this our labour.'

'How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority? In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced. In every practical point, each will submit, so far as he can, without wounding his conscience.'

'Can a Christian submit any further than this to any man, or number of men upon earth? It is undeniably certain he cannot, either to bishop, convocation, or general council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment on which all the reformers proceeded. "Every man must judge for himself, because every man must give an account of himself to God." It is impossible (Mr. Myles remarks), to read this without admiring it; let it never be forgotten that these principles formed the basis of the Methodist Conference.'

'After the design of the meeting had been thus proposed, they began to consider,—first, what to teach.



2nd. How to teach. 3rd. What to do. That is, how to regulate their doctrine, discipline, and practice. The first question refers to doctrine; the second to discipline; the third to their whole economy, including their itinerancy, and the government of the societies.'

1751. We find Mr. Wesley makes the following remarks upon a conference held in that year. 'Monday (says he), our conference began, and the more we conversed, the more brotherly love increased. The same spirit we found on Tuesday and Wednesday. I expected to have heard many objections to our first doctrines. But none appeared to have any; we seemed to be all of one mind as well as one heart.'

1756. He says, 'About fifty of us being met, the rules of the society were read over and carefully considered one by one. But we did not find any that could be spared. So we all agreed to abide by them all, and to recommend them with our might.' Again, he says, in reference to the conference held the following year, 'From the first hour to the last, there was no jarring string, but all was harmony and love.'

Concerning the conference held in 1759, Mr. Wesley observes, 'Our time was almost entirely employed in examining whether the spirit and lives of our preachers were suitable to their profession. Great was the unanimity and love that reigned among us.'

'From this time the moral, religious, and ministerial character of the preachers have been strictly examined at the conference in every year. The punishment inflicted on an offending brother are, 1st. A rebuke from the president, before the whole conference. 2nd. The being put back on trial. 3rd. Suspension for a year. 4th. The expulsion from the body. These

punishments are inflicted according to the nature of the offence.'

1767. Mr. Wesley remarks, that 'love and harmony reigned' in the conference of that year, and observe 'But we have all need of more love and holiness: and in order thereto of crying continually, Lord, increase our faith.'

1789. The last but one at which Mr. Wesley was present, he says, 'About a hundred preachers were present, and never was our Master more eminently present with us.'

The preachers acted in the same spirit afterwards. We have the following account of the breaking up of the first conference (1791), after the death of Mr. Wesley:—'The business being ended, the conference broke up. Great was the comfort of the preachers that such a foundation was laid for the peace and prosperity of the societies. The Lord they saw was better to them than their boding fears. His servants were of one heart and of one mind. The voice of thanksgiving ascended up on high, and they departed to their several circuits blessing and praising God.'

'The preachers had conversed together previously to the regular opening of the conference, and were greatly strengthened and comforted by knowing each others mind that they were determined to abide in the good way in which they had been called, and to be followers of their deceased father, as he had been of Christ; and the first business done, when the conference was opened, was the passing an unanimous resolution to that effect.' The following minute was then prepared for insertion:—

'It may be expected, that the conference should make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley, but they

find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event.

‘ Their souls do truly mourn for their great loss ; and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their much esteemed father and friend by endeavouring, though with great humility and diffidence, to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life.’

‘ Mr. Bradford, who used to travel with Mr. Wesley, then delivered the following letter to the president :—

To the Methodist Conference.

Chester, April 7th, 1785.

‘ My Dear Brethren,

Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave this my last words with you.

I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the deed of declaration, to assume any superiority over your brethren, but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit. In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood School, in disposing of your yearly contributions, and the preachers’ fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even unto the end.

‘ JOHN WESLEY.’

‘The conference immediately and unanimously resolved that all the preachers who were in full connection with them should enjoy every privilege that the members of the conference enjoy, agreeably to the above written letter of their venerable deceased father in the Gospel and consistent with the deed of declaration.’

See again the spirit of the preachers at the conference of 1795. ‘As the connection had been so greatly agitated, it was agreed that the first day should be spent in fasting and prayer, that God would show us mercy and grant wisdom from above to direct us how we might yet keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We did not ask in vain. Several of the trustees, and other persons, who had assembled from several parts on account of the dispute, joined with the preachers in their addresses to the Throne of Grace, and partook with them of the Lord’s Supper, which concluded the service of the day.’

1796. The following memorandum for the time of conference was now published; it was drawn up by Mr Bradburn:—1st. Be tender of the character of every brother; but keep at the utmost distance from countenancing sin. 2nd. Say nothing in the conference but what is strictly necessary, and to the point. 3rd. If accused by any one, remember, recrimination is no acquittance, therefore, avoid it. 4th. Beware of impatience of contradiction; be firm, but be open to conviction. The cause is God’s, and he needs not the hand of an Uzzah to support his ark. The being too tenacious of a point, because you brought it forward, is only feeding self. Be quite easy if a majority decide against you. 5th. Use no craft or guile to gain any point. Genuine simplicity will always support itself.

But there is no need always to say all you know or think. 6th. Beware of too much confidence in your own abilities, and never despise an opponent. 7th. Avoid all lightness of spirit, even what would be innocent anywhere else. Thou, God, seest me.'

'1802. The greatest harmony reigned among the preachers during the time of their sittings; there was no appearance of levity, anger, or ill-will, but all their debates were carried on with seriousness, patience, and love. And, on the morning the conference broke up, the Rev. Dr. Coke, assisted by the Rev. Adam Averil, administered the sacrament to the preachers, after which several of them prayed, and parted with many tears, accompanied with the kiss of charity. All that were present acknowledged the power of God.'

Such is the description given by Mr. Myles of the spirit of the conference up to 1802.

'The following are the twelve rules of a helper (all the travelling preachers were called helpers), which were agreed upon at the conference held in London, 1763. These rules every preacher must subscribe on his being admitted into full connection. Some of them were drawn up by Mr. Wesley, before there was any conference:—

'1st. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

'2nd. Be serious. Let your motto be, holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

'3rd. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly with young women.

‘ 4th. Take no step towards marriage, without first consulting with your brethren. •

‘ 5th. Believe evil of none, unless you see it done; take heed how you credit it; put the best construction on every thing; you know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner’s side.

‘ 6th. Speak evil of no one, else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.

‘ 7th. Tell every one what you think wrong in them, and that plainly as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

‘ 8th. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing master. A preacher of the Gospel is a servant of all.

‘ 9th. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching (if time permit), or drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour’s.

‘ 10th. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And in general do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

‘ 11th. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you not. Observe, it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance; and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And, remember, a Methodist preacher is to mind every point,

great and small, in the Methodist discipline. Therefore, you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you.

‘ 12th. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time, in the manner which we direct; partly in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord’s vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory. The conference never saw cause to alter or amend these rules.’

Mr. Wesley, in one of the conferences, I think, 1766, after describing the state of the society at that time, enters into some very particular observations and directions respecting the preachers and people. His words are,—‘ I do not depend on seeing another conference. Therefore, I will now speak once for all, as taking my leave of you.

‘ I cannot but know more of the state both of the Methodist preachers and people than any other person; because I see more of the preachers and more of the people, in every part of the kingdom.

‘ Therefore, I can give you such an account, both of the preachers and the people, as no other person can. And you are fully assured that I am not prejudiced against either the preachers or the people.

‘ I begin with the latter. The world says the Methodists are no better than other people. This is not true. Yet it is nearer the truth than we are willing to imagine.

‘ For, 1st. Personal religion, either towards God or



man, is amazingly superficial among us. I can but just touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us ; how little communion with God ! How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature ! How much love of the world, desire of pleasure, of ease, of praise, of getting money ! How little brotherly love ! What continual judging one another ! What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale bearing ! What want of moral honesty ! To instance only in a few particulars.

‘ What servants, journeymen, labourers, carpenters, bricklayers, do as they would be done by ? Which of these does as much work as he can ? Set him down for a knave that does not. Who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses ? Write him knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.

‘ Second, Family religion is shamefully wanting, and almost in every branch. And the Methodists in general will be little better till we can take quite another course with them. For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels ? We must instruct them from house to house ; till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be little better than other people. But we shall find many difficulties, both in ourselves and the people.

‘ 1st. In ourselves there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

‘ 2nd. We have also a base, man-pleasing temper, which makes us let men perish, rather than lose their love, and let them go quietly to hell, lest we should anger them.



‘ 3rd. Some of us have also a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, or to speak plain. We blush to speak for Christ, or to contradict the devil, or to save a soul.

‘ 4th. Our interest stops our mouths, and makes us unfaithful in the work of Christ.

‘ 5th. But the great hinderance is, weakness of faith: so our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

‘ 6th. Lastly, we are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, to win upon them, and suit all their discourse to their several conditions and tempers, to choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, and terror, and love, and meekness, and evangelical allurements?

‘ And we have as many difficulties to grapple with in our people.

‘ 1st. Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverseness by the force of reason, and the power of love.

‘ 2nd. And many are so dull, that they will shun being taught, for fear of showing their dulness. And indeed you will find it extremely hard, to make them understand the very plainest points.

‘ 3rd. And it is still harder to fix things on their heart, without which, all our labour is lost. If you have not therefore great seriousness and fervency, what good can you expect? And when all is done, it is the Spirit of grace, He alone who must do the work.

‘ 4th. And when we have made some impressions upon their hearts; if we look not after them, they will soon die away.

‘ But as great as this labour of private instruction is, it is absolutely necessary. For after all our preaching, many of our people are almost as ignorant, as if they had never heard the Gospel. I study to speak as plain as I can ; yet I frequently meet with those who have been my hearers many years, who know not, whether Christ be God or man ; or, that infants have any original sin. And how few are there, that know the nature of repentance, faith and holiness ? Most of them have a sort of confidence, that Christ will justify and save them, while the world has their hearts, and they live to themselves. And I have found by experience, that one of these has learned more from an hour’s close discourse, than from ten years public preaching. And undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the Apostle,—I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.

‘ This is likewise necessary to the greater glory of God, and the fuller success of the Gospel. O brethren, if we could generally set this work on foot, in all our societies, and prosecute it skilfully and zealously, what glory would redound to God thereby ! If the common ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works of God, surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make them his delight.

‘ And this is necessary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this day. Look round about, and see how many of them are still

in apparent danger of damnation! And how can you walk and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal, and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate exhortation, O then, for God's sake, and for the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation.

‘ What cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that have so long neglected this great and good work? that have been preachers so many years, and have done as little by personal instructions for the saving of men's souls? If we had but set on this work sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ? And how much holier and happier, might we have made our societies before now? And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many hinderances in the way; and so there are still, and always will be. But the greatest hinderance was in ourselves, in our dulness, and littleness of faith and love. O that God would thoroughly humble us, and cause us to bewail our own neglects; that we may not think it enough to lament the sins of others, while we overlook our own!

‘ But it is objected: 1st. This course will take up so much time, that we shall have no time to follow our studies.

‘ I answer, 1st. Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is better. 2nd. By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge of God and eternity. 3rd. But you will have abundant time for gaining other knowledge too, if you spend all your mornings therein. Only sleep not more than you need. And

never be idle, nor triflingly employed. But, 4th. If you can do but one, either follow your studies, or instruct the ignorant. Let your studies alone. I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the perdition of one soul.

‘ It is objected: 2nd. The people will not submit to it. If some do not, others will gladly. And the success with them may be so much, as to repay all our labour. O let us herein follow the example of St Paul. 1st. For our general business, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. 2nd. Our special work, Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock. 3rd. Our doctrine, Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4th. The place and manner of teaching, I have taught you publicly, and from house to house. 5th. The object, and internal manner, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears. This it is that must win souls, and preserve them. 6th. His innocency and self-denial for the advantage of the Gospel, I have coveted no man’s silver or gold. 7th. His patience, Neither do I count my life dear unto myself. And among all our motives, these should be ever before our eyes: 1st. The Church of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood. 2nd. Grievous wolves shall enter in; yea, of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things. Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good, than twenty years study of lower things.

‘ We may, 1st. Every preacher take an exact catalogue of those in society, from the one end of each town to the other. 2nd. Go to each house, and give them suitable exhortation and direction, the instructions for children. 3rd. Be sure to deal gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can.

See that the children get these by heart. Advise the grown persons, to see that they understand them. And enlarge upon and apply every sentence as closely as you can. And let your dealing with those you begin with, be so gentle, winning, and convincing, that the report of it may move others to desire your coming. True, it is far easier to preach a good sermon, than to instruct the ignorant in the principles of religion. And as much as this work is despised by some, I doubt not but it will try the parts and spirits of us all. So Archbishop Usher: "Great scholars may think it beneath them to spend their time in teaching the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. But they should consider, that the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very master-piece of the wisest builder, according to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, saith the great Apostle. And let the wisest of us all try whenever we please, we shall find, that, to lay this ground-work rightly, to make an ignorant man understand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trial of all our skill."

' Perhaps in doing this, it may be well, 1st. After a few loving words spoken to all in the house, to take each person singly into another room, where you may deal closely with them, about their sin, and misery, and duty. Set these home, or you lose all your labour. At least let none be present but those who are quite familiar with each other.

' 2nd. Hear what the children have learned by heart.

' 3rd. Choose some of the weightiest points, and try by further questions how they understand them. As, do you believe you have sin in you? That you were

born in sin? What does sin deserve? What remedy has God provided for guilty helpless sinners?

‘ 4th. Often with the question suggest the answer. As, what is repentance? Sorrow for sin, or a conviction that we are guilty, helpless sinners! What is faith? A divine conviction of things not seen!

‘ 5th. When you perceive they do not understand the stress of your question, you must lead them into it by other questions. So I have asked some, “How do you think your many and great sins will be pardoned?” They answer, “By repenting and mending my life,” and never mention Christ. I ask further, “But do you think your amendments will make satisfaction for your past sins?” They will answer, “We hope so, or else we know not what will.” One would think now, these had no knowledge of Christ at all. And, indeed, some have not. But others have, and give such answers only because they do not understand the scope of the question. Ask them further, Can you be saved without the death of Christ? They immediately say No. And if ask, What has He done or suffered for you? They will say, “He shed his blood for us,” and profess, they trust in that for salvation. But many cannot express even what they have some conception of; nay, can scarce learn, when expressions are put into their mouths.

‘ With these you are to deal exceeding tenderly, lest they be discouraged.

‘ 6th. If you perceive them troubled, that they cannot answer, step in yourself and take the burden off them: answering that question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, and make a full explication of the whole business to them.

‘ 7th. Thus, when you have tried their knowledge,

proceed to instruct them yourself, according to their several capacities. If a man understand the fundamentals, fall on what you perceive he most needs, either explaining further some doctrine of the Gospel, or some duty, or showing the necessity of some thing he neglects, as may be most edifying to him. If it be one that is grossly ignorant, give him a short recital of the Christian religion in the plainest words. And, if you perceive he understands not, go over it again till he does, and if possible fix it in his memory.

‘ 8th. Next inquire into his state, whether convinced or unconvinced, converted or unconverted. Tell him, if need be, what conviction is. And then renew and enforce the inquiry.

‘ 9th. If you perceive he is unconverted, your next business is, to labour with all your skill and power to bring his heart to a sense of his condition. Set this home with a more earnest voice than you spoke before ; for, if you get it not to the heart, you do nothing.

‘ 10th. Conclude all with a strong exhortation, which must contain two parts, 1st. The duty of the heart, in order to receive Christ ; and, 2nd. The avoiding former sins, and constantly using the outward means. And here be sure, if you can, to get their promise to forsake sin, change their company, and use means. And do this solemnly, reminding them of the presence of God, that hears their promises, and will expect the performance.

‘ 11th. Before you leave them, engage the head of each family to call all his family every Sunday, before they go to bed, and hear what they can rehearse, and so continue till they have learnt all the instructions perfectly. And afterwards take care that they do not forget what they have learned.



‘ 12th. Speak differently according to the difference of those you have to deal with, as they are dull and obstinate, or timorous and tender. Be as plain as possible to those of weak capacities, and give them Scripture proof for all you say.

‘ Let us in every town, and wherever it is practicable set upon this method in good earnest, and we shall soon find why the people are not better, viz., because we are not more knowing, and more holy.’

‘ Q. Why are we not more knowing? A. Because we are idle. We forget the very first rule, “ Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.”

‘ I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many hours a-day, in God’s work, as you did formerly in man’s work? We talk, talk, or read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must cure this evil, or give up the whole work.

‘ But how? 1st. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or at least five hours in twenty-four.

“ But I read only the Bible.” Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why now, he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else.

‘ This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no books but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. “ Bring the books,” says he, but especially the



parchments, those wrote on parchment. "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade. "But different men have different tastes." Therefore some may read less than others; but none should read less than this.

' The sum is,—Go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

' Make every particular plain to their understanding. Fix it in their memory. Write it on their heart. In order to this, there must be line upon line, precept upon precept. I remember to have heard my father asking my mother, "How could you have the patience, to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?" She answered, "Why, if I had told him but nineteen times, I should have lost all my labour." What patience indeed, what love, what knowledge, is requisite for this.

' Over and above: wherever there are ten children in a society, spend at least an hour with them twice a-week. And do this, not in a dull, dry, formal manner, but in earnest, with your might.

' "But I have no gifts for this." Gifts, or no gifts, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use the means for it, particularly studying the children's traits.

' Q. Why are not we more holy? Why do not we live in eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God? Breathing the whole spirit of missionaries? A. Because we are enthusiasts: looking for the end without using the means.

‘ To touch only upon two or three instances.

‘ Do you rise at four? or even at five, when you do not preach? Do you fast once a-week? Once a-month? Do you know the obligation, or benefit of it? Do you recommend the five o'clock hour for private prayer? Do you observe it? Do you not find that any time is no time?

‘ O let us all stir up the gift of God that is in us? Let us no more sleep, as do others; but whatsoever our hands findeth to do, let us do it with our might!

‘ I think, says Mr. Wesley, he must be no fool who has gifts sufficient for these things; as neither can he be void of the grace of God, who is able to observe the rules of a helper.

‘ At this time all the travelling preachers were called helpers, viz., helpers of Mr. Wesley; some as assistants in every part of his office; and others as preachers. and he considered them with himself, as extraordinary messengers, designed by the Lord to provoke others to jealousy. He considered them as extraordinary, because in general they were not educated for the office, but were mostly young men intended for trade. They had no thought of preaching till they knew the Lord; but their labours were powerfully owned of God in the conversion of souls.

‘ Q. What general method of employing our time would you advise us to? A. 1st. As often as possible to rise at four. 2nd. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read.

‘ Q. How shall we be assured that no preacher will ever disappoint a congregation? A. By asking every one. 1st. Do you see the great sin and fatal conse-

quences of it? 2nd. Will you break a limb rather than wilfully break your word therein? 3rd. If you do, can you blame us, for not employing you any more.

‘ Q. How shall we avoid popularity? We mean such esteem or love from the people, as is not for the glory of God. A. 1st. Earnestly pray for a piercing sense of the danger, and the sinfulness of it. 2nd. Take care how you ingratiate yourself with any people by slackness of discipline. 3rd. Or by any method which another preacher cannot follow. 4th. Warn the people among whom you are most, of esteeming or loving you too much. 5th. Converse sparingly with those who are particularly fond of you. 6th. Use all the means of grace, whether instituted or prudential.

‘ A set of men acting on these principles, and laying themselves out in this manner, could not fail of being useful. For the Redeemer hath said, “To him that hath shall be given” (viz., to him that improveth what he hath, more shall be given); “and he shall have abundance.”

‘ The rules Mr. Wesley gave the preachers respecting the books, are as follows:—1st Let every preacher recommend to every society, and that frequently and earnestly, the reading the books we have published, preferable to any other. And when any new book is sent to any place, let him speak of it in the public congregation. 2nd. Let each of you do like William Pennington: carry books with you through the round. Exert yourselves in this. Be not ashamed. Be not weary. Leave no stone unturned. Let every assistant give them away prudently; and beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

‘ The following directions were given to the preachers,

respecting the method, manner, and subject of their preaching. 1st. The method. They were—1st. To invite. 2nd. To convince. 3rd. To offer Christ. 4th. To build up, and to do this in some measure in every sermon.—2nd. The manner. 1st. To begin and end precisely at the time. 2nd. To suit their subject to their audience, and to choose the plainest texts they could. 3rd. To be serious, weighty, and solemn in their whole deportment before the congregation; and to tell each other if they observed any deviation from these rules.—3rd. The subject. 1st. To preach Christ in all his offices, and to declare his law as well as his Gospel to believers and unbelievers. 2nd. To insist upon practical religion in general; and upon relative duties in particular. 3rd. To preach against Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, gaiety, or expensiveness of apparel, and contracting debts without sufficient care to discharge them. In a word, to preach against all kinds of vice, and to call the people to general repentance, in order to prevent a general visitation. For national sins call aloud for national judgments.

‘ As you have time, read, explain, and enforce, in every family, the rules of the Society, instructions for children, &c. We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself: no idleness can consist with growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

‘ But what shall we do for the rising generation? Unless we take care of this, the present revival will last only the age of a man. Who will labour herein? Let

him that is zealous for God and the souls of men, begin now.

‘ Might not the children in every place be formed into a little society? 1st. Let the preachers try by meeting them together, and giving them suitable exhortations. 2nd. By explaining to them, in an easy and familiar manner, the instructions for children. Let the preachers visit the people from house to house, and exhort them to walk closely with God. Be diligent in meeting the children every week.

‘ How may we be more useful in conversation? 1st. Fix the end of each conversation before you begin. 2nd. Watch and pray during the time. 3rd. Spend two or three minutes every hour in earnest prayer. 4th. Rarely spend above an hour at a time in conversing with any one.

‘ It was recommended to every assistant to remind every society that our original rule was, 1st. For every member to contribute one penny weekly (unless in extreme poverty); 2nd, and one shilling quarterly, at the renewing of the tickets. 3rd. And to ask each member, Can you afford to observe our rules? And to receive what he is able to give.

It was then (1782) observed; “ The Scripture says: If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, with such an one not to eat. And put away from among yourselves that wicked person. This is an express command; and it is of unspeakable importance. These money lovers are the pest of every Christian society. They have been the main cause of destroying every revival of religion. They will destroy us, if we do not put them away. But how shall we know them, without the miraculous discernment of spirits?

By their own confession. Tell any one alone, with all tenderness, ‘I am to give an account of your soul to God. Enable me to do it with joy. I am afraid you are covetous. Answer me a few questions, in order to remove that fear. By their fruits. For instance, a man not worth a shilling enters our society, yet he freely gives a penny a week; five years after he is worth scores of pounds, he gives a penny a week still. I must think this man covetous, unless he assures me he bestows his charity some other way. For every one is covetous whose beneficence does not increase in the same proportion as his substance.

‘What can be done to revive and enlarge the work of God? Spread our books more, carry them round the circuit with you, and recommend them to the congregation. Let the preaching at five in the morning be constantly kept up. Let there be more field preaching. Put the believers into bands wherever you can. Change the stewards annually. Beware of formality in singing; guard against those complex tunes which it is impossible to sing with devotion. Attend to the quarterly fasts. Let any assistant appoint an occasional fast in his circuit. Let every preacher strongly insist upon practical religion, and relative duties; but in such a manner as to keep Christ continually in view. Prayer and fasting have always been remarkably owned of God. Preach Christian perfection, as a gradual and instantaneous blessing, and press it upon all believers as their privilege

‘Let every superintendent read the ‘Thoughts on Dress’ once a year, in all his Societies.

‘Mr. Wesley, taking a review of the work in which he had spent his life, thus remarks, especially on its

scriptural liberality:—‘There is no other religious Society under Heaven which requires nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all around you, you cannot be admitted into the Church, or Society of the Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, or any other, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion, but they think and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship, but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles! Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us! What Society shares it with us?’

The few preceding extracts will be sufficient to convince any unprejudiced reader that the original design of the Conference was simply the salvation of mankind, agreeably with the tenor of Rule 11th of an Helper. (see page 48.)

It was that gracious Being, from whom cometh every good, who put it in the hearts of John Wesley and others, to go forth in His name, and in His strength, to do good to the souls and bodies of mankind; and worked with them, confirming the word with signs following. Salvation spread through the length and breadth of the land, the vilest sinners were converted. Societies were formed in almost every place, who gave proof by what they did and suffered, that they had not believed a cunningly devised fable; but that they had experienced the power of God in the salvation of their



souls. And to them Methodism was dear; they loved it and clave to it. Like that excellent man, William Carvosso, to whom "methodism was emphatically the cause of God." It united in itself everything that was dear to him. He loved the doctrines, the discipline, the ministers, the economy of methodism in all its bearings and relations. Disputes and changes, and divisions he had often witnessed; but such things never in the least degree moved him. With his whole heart, in life and death, he adhered to the doctrines, discipline, and ministry which formed the instrument that God had rendered so effectual in rescuing his soul from sin, and misery, and hell; and constituting him an heir of glory, and a possessor of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

They who sincerely love Wesleyan Methodism will rejoice, if, upon inquiry, they find it to be in a prosperous state; and that it is now as successful in accomplishing the end first proposed, as it ever was. But, if it is found to have declined, to have swerved from the right way, and to have lost its original spirit and character, then sorrow and mourning will be the result. For although we possess the charity that hopeth all things, yet we are not rendered insensible to the real state of things, nor led to the absurd attempt to reconcile contradictions. While jealousy for the honour and welfare of Christ's cause upon the earth will lead the truly pious soul on the one hand to resist and repudiate every appearance of evil in the Church; yet, on the other, the same spirit will lead them not to overlook the smallest indication of good. They desire nothing more than the prosperity of Zion; they are not actuated by prejudice, or party spirit; they are on



the Lord's side. The glory of God in the salvation of souls is their one desire.

The sum of the whole is: Methodism is love, universal love to God and man; and a methodist is one who possesses this love in his heart, and manifests it in his life. Adhering to this proper definition, we need not err much in an examination as to the present state of Methodism.

Some of the means used by the early Wesleyan Methodists, were field preaching, or "open air preaching." And there was the early morning preaching. The visiting and teaching from house to house, the families of the Society. There were also private and public band meetings. There was great diligence shown in recommending from the pulpit the Wesleyan books, and distributing them among the people. There was a palpable separation from the manners and fashions of the world, not only as it regarded their conversation, and manner of dealing, but also with respect to their food, furniture, dress, &c. There was the sermon upon dress expressly required to be read once a year to the congregations. Great caution was observed as to who was admitted into Society, and that members produced their tickets, that strangers should not be admitted into their private means, which they held sacred. The prescribed manner of life for the preachers, and also for the people, the description of persons to be chosen for leaders, stewards, &c.; and many other particulars as to doctrine, duty, and discipline, contained in the preceding pages, which may be placed in juxtaposition with the present state of things; and it will not require very deep penetration to see, at least, that the whole of the machinery of Wesleyan Methodism is not now in full operation.

Certainly, we have no Mr. Wesley at the present day: no man that lives such a self-denying life, who goes through the land diffusing the truth as it is in Jesus, with such plainness of speech, earnestness and simplicity of manner, in the open market-place, the fields, or the highways; to so many thousands of his fellow sinners, and whose labours are crowned with God's blessing in the conversion of souls in so remarkable a manner. Some may say, 'We have many Mr. Wesleys among us, both in principle and practice, though not to such an extent. That Mr. Wesley was one of those remarkable characters, that are occasionally raised up by the special power of God, to meet some extraordinary circumstances of the times, and that we have no more reason, in sober judgment, to expect a succession of such men, than to expect a succession of the power peculiar to the Apostles.'

I have no desire to controvert the point. We know that Mr. Wesley lived a devoted, laborious, self-denying life. And a glorious harvest of precious souls was the fruit with which the Head of the Church crowned his labours. And we could heartily wish to see a multitude of such labourers sent into the harvest of God.

'Mr. Wesley and his faithful fellow-labourers were made what they were by the anointing of the Holy One which was upon them; and the same prayer of faith will bring upon us an unction equally rich and sanctifying. The present times are somewhat different from those in which these men of God lived: but the duties of both are substantially the same; and there never was a period when there was a greater need of that plain, faithful, and rousing ministry, of which the Wesleys set the example, than there is at this day.' Open air preaching appears to be out of use among us. Why it is so, is another matter; whether a satisfactory reason

for it can be given or not I leave. The fact of its disuse, I think, implies a very serious declension, and an extensive loss, with regard to the increase and spread of Methodism. That it is a cross will be very readily admitted; but it is a cross that Mr. Wesley took up, he 'submitted to become vile,' thus setting the example and then earnestly enjoining it upon the preachers. If it is neglected, how can we expect such an ingathering of souls from the outcasts of the people as when it was practised so extensively by the Messrs. Wesleys? The original design of those excellent men must very much fail from such a state of things. Methodism must be very materially affected by such a declension as this. How can a Minister call the great mass of sinners to repentance, while his preaching is confined to the pulpit of a Chapel? They will not come to him; and does not Methodism say, 'then we must go to them.' It is mere folly to suppose that Preaching the Gospel is to be limited to the Pulpit. We may very reasonably conclude that Methodism never would have extended as it did, had it not been for open air preaching. I think no one will attempt to prove that open air preaching is superseded by the City Mission, or Scripture Reading. Whatever amount of good may be doing by these excellent institutions, yet, upon the whole, it is but a small portion of the community they have access to. While the one should be done, the other should not be left undone.

Why do not the Preachers shine more conspicuously as lights to the benighted multitude, by presenting themselves in the open air, and calling around them those who, perhaps, never think of attending the preaching of the word of God in His House? Mr.

Wesley says, "we went forth to seek that which was lost (more eminently lost) to call the most flagrant, hardened, desperate sinners to repentance." To this end, they preached in those places where they thought such most likely to be found. Methodism requires it. Mr. Wesley said it was absolutely essential to the spread and success of it. And he continued the practice of it to the close of his life. To try to argue the matter out of countenance, or set up plausible reasons why it should be discontinued, or even to approve of it, and defend it; and yet not put it into practice, is only making the case worse. The fact is, open air preaching is part and parcel of good old Wesleyan Methodism. If it is not now in use, then is laid aside one of the principal levers (as far as regards human effort) used by Mr. Wesley in moving mankind to turn from the error of their ways. I do not know what can be proposed to stand instead of it. However many Chapels may be built, and whatever may be the order of their architecture; that will not meet the case. It does not require all the peculiar talents of Mr. Wesley to do it. Many who were unlettered men, practised it with abundant success in the conversion of sinners. But we have many excellent men among us, men of superior talents, both natural and acquired; if they were the necessary qualifications. But it is in the School of Christ, and nowhere else, that ministerial qualifications are to be obtained. "Jesus Christ, in order to mortify human vanity, to convince the world that Religion was a plain, simple thing, and that a little common sense, accompanied with an ardent love to God and man, was sufficient to propagate it, without any aid derived from the schools of human science, took twelve poor illiterate

men into his company, admitted them to an intimacy with himself, and, after he had kept them awhile in tuition, sent them to preach the good tidings of salvation to their countrymen. He never paid any regard to the place where he delivered his sermons. He preached in the Temple, in synagogues, public walks, and private houses, on mountains, in barges and ships. His Missionaries imitated him; and convenience for the time, was consecration of the place." And I cannot but think, that the Lord says to us at the present day, 'Go thou and do likewise.' It is quite clear, that an ingathering of souls to the Society cannot be obtained from that source when it is not in use; consequently, Wesleyan Methodism is not enlarging as it ought.

There is one remark I think necessary here, *viz.*: Better, far better would it be to renounce open air preaching altogether, then to send unqualified persons to the work. In the early days of Methodism men were thrust out, yea, and against their will; zeal for God, and love to souls, together with the great responsibility they felt laid upon them to preach the Gospel, constrained them to take up the cross, but it was a cross they would have avoided if they had conferred with flesh and blood. Nothing but the pure element of Methodism, Divine love, can fit a man, efficiently to preach the Gospel. A man may have front enough to face a multitude and talk nonsense, and worse than that; and he may have knowledge enough to inspire him with confidence on that head; but nothing short of the principle expressed in the language of our Poet will qualify for the work,—

'The love of Christ doth me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men;

With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the gaping grave.  
For this let men revile my name ;  
No cross I shun, I fear no shame :  
All hail, reproach ! and welcome pain !  
Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain.'

In order to revive and enlarge the work of God, (says Mr. Wesley,) let the preaching at five o'clock in the morning be constantly kept up. Where is this done ? ' At the top of the Foundry was a small bell, which was rung as the signal of the preaching at five o'clock in the morning, and of other religious services. This part of London was then open, and unfurnished with lamps ; and the Methodist people, men and women, were regularly seen, at that early hour, during the winter season, selecting their steps by the help of a small lantern, and winding their way to the house of prayer, drawn by the well known sound, and anticipating those lessons of evangelical instruction which their venerated teachers were accustomed to deliver.' Why are there not such means now ? The disuse of this, if no more, is at least an evidence of our declension. It was a mean of grace, no doubt, fraught with incalculable good ; and a test of piety which I believe many would abide now. If there is any doubt about it, let it be tried.

The pastoral care—visiting and teaching from house to house the families of the Society—was estimated so highly by Mr. Wesley, that he says, ' it is indispensable in order to insure success, that without it their preaching would be in vain ; and he admitted of no plea, no excuse—the necessity was absolute ; therefore, they must do it as they could, until they did it as they would, or give up the work.'

How truly primitive and apostolic is all this; how characteristic of the true and faithful Pastor, of which Mr. Wesley gave such a striking example. There is no extravagance here—no carrying things too far. “The love of Christ kindled in their breasts, (the Messrs. Wesleys and others) a generous and yearning affection for the whole human race, and a willingness to lay down their lives, if others might only be converted and saved.” And shall we dare to shut our eyes against the truth, and forget that if this gracious principle actuates the soul, it leads to similar action? The necessity and reasonableness of this duty are evident. ‘Were it even certain that professing Christians in general walk according to their holy vocation, would it be commendable in Pastors to show less concern for the salvation of Christ’s apparent Disciples, than was anciently discovered by St. Paul for the conversion of persecuting heathens? Christians are our brethren. The Church, our common mother, has nourished us with the same spiritual milk, and calls us to a participation of the same heavenly inheritance. Christians are no more strangers; and even those, who are bad citizens and unfaithful domestics, are, nevertheless, in some sense, citizens of the same city with ourselves, and “of the household of God.” Hence, as we compose but one household, so whenever we are disposed to neglect any part of this family, we may apply to ourselves the following words of the Apostle:—“If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Let ministers then be placed in the happiest imaginable circumstances, and it will still become them to cry out, with the pious benevolence of St. Paul—“As we have



opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

No one whose heart and mind are rightly directed, but will rejoice at the increase of schools for the purpose of teaching the rising generation ; and also commend the effort made in devoting so much money, time, and labour to accomplish so laudable a purpose. But I think it will be admitted, that no system of general application will meet the peculiar individual wants of the community, whether it regards children or adults. In order to a successful infusion of religious truth, there must be an individual application. And the economy of Methodism is just adapted to this, from the faithful delivery of the truth in the open air to the hardened sinner—to the searching application of it in the class meeting. Mr. Wesley's experience led him to declare that a certain class of persons, with whom he had to do, learned more from an hour's close discourse, than from ten years public preaching. Hence he enters so particularly into the directions to the preachers concerning this all-important work. The want of this has been the source of very much sorrow and general complaint.

' When we see a number of persons in perilous circumstances, charity constrains us to make our first efforts in favour of those who appear to be in the most imminent danger. Such are unholy christians. Sinful heathens are doubtless in danger ; obstinate Jews in still greater peril ; but impenitent christians are in a situation abundantly more lamentable than either, since they offend against clearer light and knowledge, equally inattentive to the most gracious promises on the one hand, and the most terrible menaces on the other. To sin with the New Testament in our hand, and with the



sound of the Gospel in our ears—to sin with the seal of baptism on our forehead, and the name of Christ in our lips—to sin and receive the Holy Communion—to ratify and break the most solemn engagements: what is this but earnestly labouring out our own damnation, and plunging ourselves into those abysses of wretchedness which Pagans and Jews are unable to fathom? How eagerly then should every believer attempt to rescue and succour his falling or tempted brethren?’

That ardent desire and affectionate solicitude for the salvation of souls, exemplified in the conduct of the early Methodists, were only the natural effects of that Christian charity implanted in their breasts by the Giver of all good.

‘ For many years successively their lives were in continual jeopardy in every part of the kingdom. They were stoned—they were cast into the most loathsome prisons—they were dragged through the streets by the hair of their head—they were thrown into pools and rivers of water—they were seized as vagrants, and pressed for soldiers. Some were transported to the colonies abroad; many fled to caves, and to the hiding places of the earth; and one at least fell a victim to the bloody mob! And, but for the signal interpositions of a gracious Providence, they must all have inevitably fallen by the beasts of the people. Yet violent as was the spirit of persecution, which they every where met with, it certainly did not exceed the zeal with which those burning and shining lights persevered in the work of the Lord, who, in the midst of fire-brands, arrows, and death, shook the trembling gates of hell, and valiantly pressed through all that opposed or impeded their way! continuing to spread themselves more and

more in every direction—preaching in highways and hedges, in fields, streets, barns, cellars, and garrets, with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down. The word of grace gloriously prevailed; prejudices began to melt away; the storm of persecution gradually abated; and the remarkable conversion of many notorious profligates and persecutors, compelled their most virulent adversaries to confess that God was with them.’

‘In like manner, the primitive Christians exposed themselves to imminent danger, that they might give proof of the most exalted charity, by snatching souls from sin and death. And, when they were not able to effect this by their external labours, they then wrestled in their closets, with secret prayers and tears, for the conversion of the ungodly.’

‘From the time that the eyes of St. Paul were opened to a perception of the Gospel,’ says Mons Romilly, pastor of a church in Geneva, ‘we find him no longer the same person. He is another man—he is a new creature, who thinks no more but on Gospel truths—who hears nothing—who breathes nothing but the Gospel—who speaks on no other subject—who attends to no other thing but the voice of the Gospel—who desires all the world to attend with him to the same voice, and wishes to communicate his transports to all mankind. From this happy period, neither the prejudices of flesh and blood, neither respect to man, nor the fear of death, nor any other consideration, is able to withstand him in his course. He moves on with serenity in a path sown thick with reproaches and pain. What has he to fear? He despises the maxims of the world, nay, the world itself;—its hatred as well as its favour—its joys as well as its sorrows—its meanness a

well as its pomp. Time is no longer an object with him, nor is his economy regulated by it. He is superior to everything; he is immortal. Though the universe arm itself against him—though hell open its abysses—though affliction assault him on every side, he stands immoveable in every storm, looking with contempt upon death, conscious that he can never die. Superior to all his enemies, he resists their united attempts with the arms of the Gospel, opposing to time and hell, eternity and heaven.'

And, 'must not every man, whether clergyman or layman, be in some respects like the Apostles, or go to hell? Can any man be saved if he be not like the Apostles? A follower of them as they were of Christ? And ought not every preacher of the Gospel to be in a peculiar manner like the Apostles, both in holy tempers, in exemplariness of life, and in his indefatigable labours for the good of souls? Woe unto every Ambassador of Christ, who is not like the Apostles in this! In holiness, in making full proof of his ministry, in spending and being spent for Christ. We cannot, and therefore we need not, be like them in working outward miracles. But we may and ought, in working together with God, for the salvation of men. And the same God, who was always ready to help their infirmities, is ready to help ours also. He who made them workmen that needed not to be ashamed, will teach us also rightly to divide the word of truth. In this respect, likewise in respect of his having help from God for the work whereunto he is called, every preacher of the Gospel is like the Apostles. Otherwise he is of all men most miserable.'

'What you require of pastors is unreasonable in the highest degree. If, indeed, they are called to labour

for the salvation of souls, with the zeal and assiduity of St. Paul, the holy ministry must be regarded as the most painful of all professions, and, of consequence, our pulpits will be shortly unoccupied.'

'Monsieur Ostervald, who foresaw this objection, has completely answered it in his Third Source of the Corruption which reigns among Christians :—"It will not fail to be objected," says this venerable author, "that if none were to be admitted to holy orders except those who are possessed of every necessary qualification, there could not possibly be procured a sufficient number of pastors for the supply of our churches. To which I answer, that it would be abundantly better to expose ourselves to this inconvenience, than to violate the express law of the written word. A small number of chosen pastors is preferable to a multitude of unqualified teachers. (One Elijah was more powerful than all the prophets of Baal.) At all hazards, we must adhere to the command of God, and leave the event to Providence. But, in reality, this dearth of pastors is not so generally to be apprehended. To reject those candidates for holy orders, whose labours in the church would be altogether fruitless, is undoubtedly a work of piety; and such alone would be repulsed by the apprehension of a severe scrutiny and an exact discipline. Others, on the contrary, who are in a condition to fulfil the duties of the sacred office, would take encouragement from this exactness and severity, and the ministry would every day be rendered more respectable in the world." Behold an answer truly worthy an apostolical man!'

'The destruction of the Eastern Churches commenced in the falling away of their pastors, who gradually abated in the fervour of that holy zeal with which they had

begun to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. Of such unfaithful teachers, Christ affectingly complained in the earliest period of His church, and accompanied His complaints with the most terrible menaces; "Write unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus," said he to St. John, 'I know thy former works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil. And thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles and are not, and has found them liars, &c. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.'

'The warning was unattended to, and, at length, the threatened blow was struck. Thus fell the Church of Ephesus, and thus every church upon earth is fallen, making way for that 'mystery of iniquity,' and that general apostacy which have been so long foretold. So true is it, that apostolical charity, that charity which was first lighted up on the day of Pentecost, is still absolutely necessary to every pastor, to every church, and of consequence to every believer.'

'The true Christian, called to become a disciple of the blessed Jesus, rather than refuse the offered privilege, renounces his all. If this token of devotion to Christ is discernible in the character of every true Christian, it is still more conspicuous in the character of every true minister. Such a person, inwardly called by the grace of God to a state of discipleship with Christ, and outwardly consecrated to such a state by the imposition of hands, gives himself unreservedly up to

the service of his condescending Master. He withstands no longer that permanent command of our exalted Lord, to which his first disciples shewed so cheerful a submission, 'Follow me.' Nor is he discouraged while Christ continues, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.' No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' 'He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' He that findeth his life shall lose it. And he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it. If there be found any pastor who cannot adopt the solemn appeal of the first ministers of Christ, 'Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee,' that man is in no situation to copy the example of his forerunners in the Christian Church, and is altogether unworthy the character he bears; since without this detachment from the world, and this devotion to the son of God, he flatters himself in vain that he is either a true minister, or a real member of Jesus Christ.'

'Observe the declaration of one whose attachment to his divine Master deserves to be had in everlasting remembrance, 'Those things which were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ.' Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, having the righteousness which is of God by faith. For none of us, true christians, or true ministers, liveth to himself or dieth to himself; but whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.'

'Professing to be either a minister or a believer of the

Gospel, without this entire devotion to Jesus Christ, is to live in a state of the most dangerous hypocrisy. It is neither more nor less than saying, Lord ! Lord ! without having a firm resolution to do what our gracious Master has commanded.

‘ The passions are the springs by which we are usually actuated. Reason alone is too weak to put us in motion so often as duty requires ; but when love, that sacred passion of the faithful, comes in to its assistance, we are then sweetly constrained to act in conformity to the various relations we sustain in civil and religious life. Thus, the God of nature has rooted, in the hearts of mothers, a fond affection which keeps them anxiously attentive to the wants of their children. And thus the spirit of God implants in the bosom of a good pastor, that ardent charity which excites him to watch over his flock with the most affectionate and unwearied attention. The love of a father to his son, the attachment of a nurse to her foster-child, the tender affection of a mother to her infant, are so many emblems employed in the holy scriptures to set forth the sweetness and ardour of that Christian love, which animates the true minister to the performance of his several duties. ‘ You know,’ says St. Paul, ‘ how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.’ God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.’ Receive us, for ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. Worldly pastors can form no idea of that ardent charity



which dictates such benevolent language, and accompanies it with actions which demonstrate its sincerity. This is one of those mysterious things which are perfectly incomprehensible to the natural man, and which frequently appear to him as the extremest folly. This fervent love improves us into new creatures by the sweet influence it maintains over all our tempers. This holy passion deeply interests the faithful pastor in the concerns of his fellow Christians, and teaches him to rejoice in the benefits they receive, as though his own prosperity were inseparably connected with theirs. 'I thank my God,' writes the great Apostle, to the benefactor of his brethren, 'making mention of Thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all Saints, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by Thee, brother.' The sorrow and the joy of this zealous imitator of Christ were generally influenced by the varying states of the faithful. When any, who had once run well, were seen loitering by the way, or starting aside from the path of life, he expressed the most sincere affection on their account. 'There are some, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' On the other hand, the progress of believers was as marrow to his bones, and as the balsam of life to his heart. 'We are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong. And this also we wish, even your perfection. My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Be blameless and



harmless ; the sons of God without rebuke, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.'

' Real Christianity is the school of humble charity, in which every true minister can say with Christ, according to his growth in grace, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

' There is no amiable disposition which our Lord more strongly recommends to his followers than lowliness of mind. From his birth to his death, he gave himself a striking example of the most profound humility, joined to the most ardent charity. After having washed the feet of his first disciples, that is, after he had taken the place of a slave at their feet, he addresses them as follows:—' Know ye, what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord. And ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord ; neither he that is sent, greater than He that sent him.' Again, he says, to the same effect:—' Ye know the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. But, whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.'

' To be truly useful,' says the Rev. W. E. Miller. I perceive I must be willing to become nothing. And oh, how difficult for a preacher ! Here we split, and here I see the decline of Methodism.'

‘ Humility or poverty of spirit, which is set forth by Christ as the first beatitude, leads us, by prayer, to all the benedictions of the Gospel, and to that lively gratitude which gives birth to thanksgiving and joy. Lovely humility ! penetrate the hearts of all Christians, animate every pastor, give peace to the church, and happiness to the universe.’

‘ This humble love, this charity, avoids all appearance of haughtiness, and is never seen to act in an unbecoming manner. On the contrary, she fears lest she should give offence to any ; and, full of benevolence, she labours for the edification of all. Hence the charitable pastor cannot act otherwise than with a holy condescension towards all men, and especially towards the ignorant and poor. And, without ever slipping his foot into the pit of error, he sometimes approaches it, with a happy mixture of compassion and prudence, for the relief of those who are unable to extricate themselves from it. Though I am free from all men, writes St. Paul, yet I have made myself servant unto all, that I may gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. To them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without a written law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel’s sake. All things are lawful for me, continued he, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. When ye sin against the brethren by-wounding their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother

to offend. Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

‘Behold that sweet prudence of charity, which our Lord recommended to his disciples, when he pointed out the folly of putting new wine into such bottles as were unable to resist the force of the fermenting liquor. And of this affectionate discretion He himself gave them a striking example, when He said—I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. If this condescending carriage was lovely in the blessed Jesus, it will ever appear amiable in his humble imitators, who can say, with the Apostle Paul, to the weak members of the Church, ‘We have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for, hitherto, ye were not able to bear it.’

‘Special care is, however, to be taken, that this charitable condescension may never betray the interests of truth and virtue. Abstain, saith St. Paul, from all appearance of evil, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. For herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. And our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you ward, among whom we have laboured in the Gospel.

‘If there exist Pastors, who lack this condescension towards the poor, or who are destitute of that humble charity, which can familiarise itself with the most ignorant, for their edification and comfort. If there are ministers to be found, who are very meanly complaisant

to the rich, and who are void of holy resolution in the presence of the great, instead of conducting themselves with that mingled humility and dignity, which are suitable to the character they sustain—may the one and the other be convinced of the grievous error into which they are fallen, while they contemplate this opposite trait in the character of St. Paul.

‘ Ye who preside over the household of God, learn of the Apostle Paul to manifest your real superiority. Surpass your inferiors in humility, in charity, in zeal, in your painful labours for the salvation of sinners, in your invincible courage to encounter those dangers which threaten your brethren, and by your unwearied patience in bearing those persecutions, which the faithful disciples of Christ are perpetually called to endure from a corrupt world.

‘ The good pastor, by whatever name he may be distinguished, lives only to publish the Gospel, and to convert the souls committed to his charge. To restrain him then from attending to these important labours, is to force him aside from the true end of his calling, and must appear to every enlightened mind a greater act of cruelty, than to withhold the rich from giving alms, or to detain an expert swimmer from saving his drowning brethren.’

And the purity of their motives is evinced by their lives. ‘ Though it be true, that they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar ; yet nothing is so detestable to the faithful pastor, as the idea of enriching himself with the sacred spoils of the altar. Observe how St. Paul expresses himself upon this subject. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Having, therefore, food and raiment,

let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil ; which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, who art set apart as a minister of the everlasting Gospel, flee these things : and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. With regard to myself, I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. Everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness ; God is witness. For ye remember our labour and travail, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you. Ye are our witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe. Behold the third time I am ready to come to you ; and I will not be burdensome to you ; for I seek not yours, but you ; For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.

‘ Behold the disinterestedness of the faithful shepherd, who is ever less ready to receive food and clothing from the flock, than to labour for its protection and support ! Behold the spirit of Christ ! And let the pastor, who is influenced by a different spirit, draw that alarming inference from his state, which he is taught to do by the following expression of St. Paul :—If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’

With regard to preaching—at the present day it

bears few of those features which marked the early Wesleyan Methodist preaching. It is to be feared that too much importance is attached to the aid of human learning, in qualifying men to preach the Gospel. It is almost an universal error; and the prejudice in favour of it so general, that, to raise your voice in any measure against it, is at once to expose yourself to contempt and reproach, nearly from all quarters; as though you despised all human learning under any circumstances. It has led multitudes of men, clergy and laity, to consider it an unwarrantable, if not an unpardonable act of any man to meddle with the ministration of sacred things, if he had not had a collegiate education. 'What do they know about it? They have never been educated for the ministry;' is not the language of the illiterate and profane only, but of the learned and moral. There may be what is called a more respectable ministry; a more acceptable state of things in the estimation of the world; from the educational system. I think it has been said, that our respectable congregations would not sit to hear an uneducated ministry; as though preaching the Gospel was some human science, to be obtained from books, or the teaching of men, and that our congregations would not endure to hear it, unless it were delivered in accordance with the rules of grammar and philosophy (which implies that the people are possessed of a very wrong spirit, and that the preachers are disposed to pamper their taste). To entertain such an idea in any degree, must certainly mar and retard the work of God. I know it is very difficult to give such a view of the subject without it being supposed you countenance a clownish, illiterate style; to countenance which would be to encourage insolence. But may it not be

feared, that any human system ; as a system professedly for the purpose of putting forth something in the shape of a finishing stroke to the candidate for the ministry, is likely to have an injurious effect upon the mind, with regard to the simplicity of preaching the Gospel ; and to form, and to establish, a stiff, formal, reserved manner in the subjects of such training ? But what says matter of fact ? Not as to expense, for they who love the Lord Jesus and his cause, would not grudge that, if it were a thousand times more than it is. But does the school system send forth *such* a goodly host to carry out the pure simplicity of good old Wesleyan Methodism, as when it was flourishing under the superintendence of Mr. Wesley ? a list of whose names might here be given ; a noble band who valiantly stood forth in behalf of the cause of Christ. If such are not the kind of workmen produced by the efforts of human institutions, however profound the learning, or ingenious the system connected therewith ; with all due deference to those who hold other views, we may ask : In what way is Methodism profited thereby ?

Instead of those plain, rousing, practical addresses, founded upon some appropriate passage of scripture, which were delivered by the early Methodists, we frequently have an attempt, with much speculation and conjecture, to delineate the life and character of one of the Patriarchs, or Prophets, or Apostles, &c. Perhaps a laboured effort for an hour, to prove something that no one in the congregation disputes.

‘ If preaching the Gospel is to publish among sinners that repentance and salvation which we have experienced in ourselves : if it is to imitate a penitent slave, who, freed from misery and iron, returns to the com-



panions of his former slavery, declaring the generosity of their prince, and persuading them to sue for mercy;—if this is to publish the Gospel of peace, then it is evident that experience and sympathy are more necessary to the due performance of this work, than all the accuracy and elocution that can possibly be acquired.

‘ When this sacred experience and this generous sympathy began to lose their prevalence in the Church, their place was gradually supplied by the trifling substitutes of study and affectation. Carnal prudence has now for many ages solicitously endeavoured to adapt itself to the taste of the wise and the learned. But while the offence of the cross is avoided, neither the wise nor the ignorant are effectually converted. The Gospel is abundantly better suited to the poor in spirit, than to those who value themselves as men of sagacity and science. I thank thee, O Father ! said the lowly Jesus, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. These babes, however, in the language of Christ, are the very persons who have been usually neglected by us, for the mere gratification of reputed sages. Alas ! how many thousand proofs do we require to convince us, that the wisdom of this world will continue to trample under foot the pearl of the Gospel, though, in order to secure its reception, it should be presented among the artificial pearls of a vain philosophy.

‘ Few can profit by a recondite, learned, abstruse, and metaphysical ministry ; but all the world can feel the force of ardent love.

‘ The efficiency of a ministry which is made to flow



primarily from sanctified feeling, is shewn in all ages, and amongst all people ; whilst, on the other hand, the comparative uselessness of one which, however true as to doctrinal statement, and unexceptionable in other respects, is equally obvious. Irrespective of piety and the blessing of God involved in the question, it is a well-known law of our nature, that tenderness subdues, and ardour excites. The successful action of mind upon mind will be in proportion to the warmth of the affections, and the consequent pity, sympathy, solicitude, and animation of the address. ‘ I have told you before, and now tell you, weeping,’ is the pathos which subdues. The man of mere reason may throw his gleams of light on the mind, and they may be pure and radiant ; but unaccompanied by emotion, they will accomplish nothing beyond general acquiescence and approval. No motion of the soul towards God and the truth will follow ; whilst the man of much less mental power and culture, put large bodies of the people into a commotion, who, in bitterness of heart, exclaim, ‘ Men and brethren, what must we do ?’

‘ Faith in the Gospel message, when exercised by the minister, will necessarily lead him to urge it home upon his hearers as a present, sufficient, and divinely appointed means of salvation ; there is an essential difference betwixt preaching the truth of God as a mere lesson of wisdom recommended to the hearer for consideration and improvement, and delivering it as the word of salvation, to be at once embraced, and its privileges enjoyed. In the one case, the doctrine taught is left for the mind to digest, and a distant moral effect to grow up from this germ of truth ; but, in the other case, the Gospel is supposed to offer a

present Saviour in all the virtue of his passion, and through a belief in Him, to produce instant effects.

‘ Nothing but such faith as we are now considering, can either enable the minister to do justice to the truth on the one hand ; or to treat with man on the question of his reconciliation aright, on the other. But, above all, faith exercised in the delivery of the Gospel message must engage and procure the blessing of God. It is this, no doubt, which gives success. Other things may have their effect, but they are only secondary. The presence, power, and effusions of the Holy Spirit, are essential to produce salvation through the word.

‘ I am come, said the good Shepherd, that my sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the vine ; ye are the branches. The faithful minister understands the signification of these mysterious expressions. He walks in this way, he follows this light, he embraces this truth, and enjoys this life in all its rich abundance. Constantly united to his Lord, by a humble faith, a lively hope, and an ardent charity, he is enabled to say with St. Paul, The love of Christ constraineth me because we thus judge, that, if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth

no more, but liveth unto God ; we likewise reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

‘ This living faith is the source, from which all the sanctity of the Christian is derived, and all the power of the true minister. It is the medium, through which that sap of grace and consolation, those streams of peace and joy, are perpetually flowing, which enrich the believing soul, and make it fruitful in every good work ; or, to speak without a metaphor, from this powerful grace proceeds that love of God and man, which influences us to think and act, either as members, or as ministers, of Jesus Christ. The character of the Christian is determined according to the strength or weakness of his faith.

‘ The true minister, looking up to the source of the important office, with which he is honoured, he can adopt with propriety the language of St. Paul ; I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, for that He hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of ; for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel, for then I should be found unfaithful to my vocation. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ. And, if he becomes not like that wicked, and slothful servant, who refused to administer to the necessities of his master’s household, he will be able, at all time to say, Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not : but having renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by

manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

‘ A person of this description, searching the depths of the human heart, of which he has acquired a competent knowledge by the study of his own, meditating with attention upon the proofs, and with humility upon the mysteries of our holy religion, giving himself up to the duty of divine things, and above all to prayer and to good works; such a pastor may reasonably hope to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of that powerful Saviour, whom he earnestly proclaims to others. Nor is it probable that such an one will labour altogether in vain. Gradually instructed in the things, which concern the kingdom of God, he will become, like the father of a family, bringing forth out of his treasures things new and old. And whether he speaks of the old man, the earthly nature, which he has put off with such extreme pain, or the new man, the heavenly nature, which he has put on with equal joy, he will speak with a conviction so powerful, and a persuasion so constraining, that the careless must necessarily be alarmed, and the faithful encouraged.

‘ When a preacher is possessed of Christian piety or, in other words, when he has made his peace with God, by that deep repentance which enables us to die unto sin, and by that living faith which unites us to Christ, he naturally invites the world to embrace a Saviour who has wrought for him so wonderful a deliverance. And this invitation he enforces with all the power and warmth, which must ever accompany deep sensibility. After having believed with the heart to the obtaining of righteousness, he is prepared to confess with his lips and to testify of his salvation: crying out, as sincerely

as Simeon, but in a sense far more complete, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for, according to thy word, mine eyes have seen thy salvation. "Here," says Mr. Ostervald, "may be applied what was spoken by our blessed Lord—A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things." Erasmus speaks the same thing—"You will never win others over to a religious life, unless you yourself are first possessed of piety. This inspires thoughts, dispositions, and words, which nothing else can produce. It is this, that animates the voice, the gesture, and every action of the Christian preacher. When he is thus grounded in piety, it is difficult to conceive with what facility, and with what success he labours, still enjoying an unspeakable sweetness in himself. Then it is, that he is truly sensible of his vocation; then he speaks in the cause of God, and then only he is in a proper situation to effect others."

'It appeared so necessary to the fathers, who composed the Synod of Berne, that every minister should be possessed of solid piety, that they believed it impossible for a man to be a good catechist without it. After recommending it to pastors to explain among the youth, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed, they add: This will be abundantly more effectual, if first of all, we are careful that Jesus Christ may arise in our hearts. The fire, with which we should then be animated, would soon stir up and warm the docile minds of children. Otherwise, that which reason alone draws from books, and is taught by other men, is no more than a human work, and will be ineffectual, till the Great Master, the Holy Spirit himself, becomes of the party, creating, renewing, and regenerating to a celestial and eternal life.'

Too many of 'the ministers of the present age are furnished in a manner suitable to their design. As they are more desirous to please than to convert their hearers, so they are peculiarly anxious to embellish the inventions of a seducing imagination. They are continually seeking after the beauty of metaphors, the brilliancy of antithesis, the delicacy of descriptions, the just arrangement of words, the aptness of gesture, the modulations of voice, and every other studied ornament of artificial eloquence. While the true minister, effectually convinced of the excellence of the Gospel, relies alone, for the effects of his public ministry, upon the force of truth, and the assistance of his divine Master.

'Observe the manner in which St. Paul expresses himself upon this subject:—"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." And I, brethren, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

'The true minister, following the example of St. Paul, after having experienced the power of these

victorious arms, exhorts every soldier of Christ to provide himself with the same spiritual weapons. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand. For we wrestle not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." And, that you may perform heroical service with these armies, pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

' So long as the faithful minister, or servant, of Christ wears and wields these scriptural arms, he will be truly invincible. But no man can gird himself with these invincible weapons, except he be born of the Spirit; nor can any Christian soldier employ them to good purpose, unless he be first endued with all that divine power, which flows from the love of God and man. He must feel, at least, some sparks of that fire of charity, which warmed the bosom of St. Paul, when he cried out—Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: Or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ and of souls constraineth us.



Mr. Fletcher anticipates and answers the following objection upon this subject:—

“ It is unreasonable to require that we should preach the Word of God, in season and out of season, as St. Paul once did, and as Timothy was afterwards exhorted to do. We find it, in this day, a matter of difficulty to prepare any public address, that may be either acceptable to the people, or honourable to ourselves.” ‘ To this objection we return the following replies.

‘ He who spake as never man spake, rejected the art of our modern orators, delivering his discourses in a style of easy simplicity, and unaffected zeal.

‘ We do not find, that St. Paul and the other Apostles imposed upon themselves the troublesome servitude of penning down their discourses. And we are well assured, that when the seventy and the twelve were commissioned to publish the Gospel, no directions of this nature were given in their case.

‘ St. Paul gives the following pastoral instructions to Timothy:—Give attendance to reading, to exhortation to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them. Take heed unto thyself and to thy doctrine; continue in them: For, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.’ Now, had it ever entered into the mind of the Apostle, that it would be proper for pastors to compose their sermons in the manner of rhetoricians, and to deliver them as public orators, he would most probably have given some intimation of this to his disciple. In such case he would

have held out to his pupil in divinity some instructions of the following nature: O Timothy, my son! I have frequently commanded thee to labour in the work of the Lord, according to my example. But as thou art not an Apostle, properly so called, and hast not received the gift of languages, I advise thee to write over thy sermons as correctly as possible. And after this, do not fail to rehearse them before a mirror, till thou art able to repeat them with freedom and grace: So that when thou art called upon public duty, thou mayest effectually secure the approbation of thine auditors, &c. The idea of such a passage in the Epistles of St. Paul, whether public or private, is too absurd to be endured.

‘ If advocates, after hastily considering a question of difficulty, are ready to plead the cause of their client before a court of judicature; can it be possible, that, after several years of meditation and study, a minister should still be unprepared to plead the cause of piety before a plain assembly?

‘ When we are deeply interested in a subject of the last importance, do we think it necessary to draw up our arguments in an orderly manner upon paper, before we attempt to deliver our sentiments upon the matter in hand? Are not the love and penetration of a parent, sufficient to dictate such advice as is suited to the different tempers and conditions of his children? After perceiving the house of our neighbour on fire, we do not withdraw to our closet to prepare a variety of affecting arguments, by way of engaging him to save both himself and his family from the flames. In such case, a lively conviction of our neighbour’s danger, and an ardent desire to rescue him from it, afford us greater

powers of natural eloquence than any rules of art can furnish us with.

‘ Neither matter nor method will be wanting upon a well-digested subject. With how much facility then may suitable expressions be expected to follow those animating sentiments, which are inspired by an ardent love to God and man; especially when the subjects of such universal concern are agitated, as death and redemption, judgment and eternity? Upon such occasions, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak;” nor will the preacher be able to repeat a tenth part of the truths which God has communicated to him, while meditating upon his texts. If malice can furnish those persons with an exhaustible fund of conversation, who delight in malice, how much more may we suppose the charity of a pastor to furnish him with an inexhaustible fund of exhortation, instruction and comfort!

‘ It has been a plea with many ministers of the Gospel, that they neglect to proclaim that Gospel during six days in the week, lest they should be unprepared to address their parishioners, with propriety, upon the seventh. With teachers who are thus scrupulously tenacious of their own reputation, we may justly be allowed to reason in the following manner:—To what purpose are all those oratorical appendages, with which you are so studious to adorn your discourses? And who hath required all this useless labour at your hand? If a servant, after being charged by his master with a message of the utmost importance, should betake himself to his chamber, and defer the execution of it day after day; would not such a delay be esteemed an unpardon-

able neglect? Or, if he should attempt to apologise for the omission, by alleging that he had been busily engaged in learning to repeat, with precision, the message he had received, and to move upon his errand with dignity and grace; would not such an excuse be regarded as an instance of the highest presumption and folly? And can we imagine, that our heavenly Master will overlook that neglect in his public messengers, which would appear, in the conduct of a private domestic, so justly condemnable?

‘What advantage has accrued to the Church by renouncing the apostolic method of publishing the Gospel? We have indolence and artifice, in the place of sincerity and vigilance. Those public discourses, which were anciently the effects of conviction and zeal, are now become the weekly exercises of learning and art. “We believe, and therefore speak,” is an expression, that has grown entirely obsolete among modern pastors. But nothing is more common among us, than to say—As we have sermons prepared upon a variety of subjects, we are ready to deliver them, as opportunity offers.

‘Many inconveniences arise from that method of preaching, which is generally adopted in the present day. While the physician of souls is labouring to impose a learned dissertation upon some plain passage of Scripture, he has but little leisure to visit those languishing patients, who need his immediate assistance. He thinks it sufficient to attend upon them every Sabbath-day, in the place appointed for public duty: But he recollects not, that those, to whom his counsel is peculiarly necessary, are the very persons, who refuse to meet him there. His unprofitable employment at

home, leaves him no opportunity to go in pursuit of his wandering sheep. He meets with them, it is true, at stated periods, in the common fold: But it is equally true, that, during every successive interval, he discovers the coldest indifference with respect to their spiritual welfare. From this unbecoming conduct of many a minister, one would naturally imagine, that the flock were rather called to seek out their indolent pastor, than that he was purposely hired to pursue every straying sheep.

‘ The most powerful nerve of the sacred ministry is ecclesiastical discipline. But this nerve is absolutely cut asunder by the method of which we now speak. When a pastor withdraws, fatigued from his study, imagining that he has honourably acquitted himself with regard to his people, he is too apt to neglect that vigilant inspection into families, upon which the discipline of the church depends.

‘ Since the orator’s art has taken the place of the energy of faith, what happy effects has it produced upon the minds of men? Have we discovered more frequent conversions among us? Are formal professors more generally seized with a religious fear? Are libertines more universally constrained to cry out, ‘ Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Do the wicked depart from the church to bewail their transgressions in private; and believers to visit the mourners in their affliction? Is it not rather to be lamented, that we are at this day equally distant from Christian charity and primitive simplicity?

‘ If we are honoured with the pastoral office, let us consider the holy scriptures as an inexhaustible mine of sacred treasures. In the law of the Lord, let us medi-

tate day and night. Before we attempt to deliver evangelical truths in public, let it be our first care to penetrate our hearts in private with an adequate sense of those truths. Let us arrange them in the most suitable order; let us adduce and compare the several passages of sacred writ, which appear to support or explain the particular doctrines we mean to insist upon. But, above all, joining faith and prayer to calm meditation, after becoming masters of our subject, let us humbly ask of God that lively and forcible elocution which flows from the unction of grace.

‘ It is necessary indeed to be scrupulously cautious, lest we abuse the liberty of preaching from meditation, by becoming followers of those who are more worthy of censure than imitation. There are pastors of this kind, who, having acquired a good degree of spiritual knowledge, and a wonderful facility of expression, unhappily begin to pique themselves upon appearing before a numerous assembly, without any previous study. Conscious of their own ability, these self-sufficient preachers make little or no preparation for one of the most solemn duties that can possibly be discharged. They hasten to a crowded auditory without any apparent concern, and, coming down from the pulpit, with an air of the same easy confidence, with which they ascended it, contentedly return to that habitual listlessness which had been interrupted by the external performance of a necessary work. Alas! if these presuming pastors could be prevailed upon to write over their sermons, to how much better purpose might they thus employ their hours, than by heedlessly trifling them away in frivolous conversation and shameful inactivity!

‘ It is not to imitate examples of this nature that we

solicit the ministers of Christ to recover those hours which are usually employed in composing their weekly discourses. How many are the important occupations of which the faithful pastor has his daily choice! The wicked are to be reclaimed, and the righteous established. Hope must be administered to the fearful, and courage to the tempted. The weak are to be strengthened and the strong to be exercised. The sick must be supported, and the dying prepared for dissolution, &c. To sum up his duties in a single sentence, he should cause the light that is in him to shine out in every possible direction before the ignorant and the learned, the rich and the poor; making the salvation of mankind his principal pursuit, and the glory of God his ultimate aim.'

Fervour, courage, and discrimination, are essentially necessary, faithfully to press home the vital doctrines of the Gospel, lest the congregations should be too generally treated as though they were all, or nearly all, in a converted state; and those expressions, my dear hearers, my beloved brethren, my Christian friends, &c., indifferently used. An extract from the writings of the amiable writer I last quoted is worthy of notice here.

' If the primitive church was disturbed and misled by unfaithful ministers, it may be reasonably presumed that in this more degenerate period of its existence, the church of God must be miserably over-run with teachers of the same character. There is, however, no small number of ministers who form a kind of medium between zealous pastors and false apostles. These irresolute evangelists are sincere to a certain point. They have some desire after the things of God, but are abundantly more solicitous for the things of the world. They form



good resolutions in the cause of their acknowledged Master, but are timid and unfaithful when called upon actual service. They are sometimes actuated with a momentary zeal, but generally influenced by servile fear. They have no experience of that ardent affection and that invincible courage with which St. Paul was animated. Their wisdom is still carnal, they still confer with flesh and blood. Such was Aaron, who yielded, through an unmanly weakness, to the impious solicitations of his people. Such was Jonah, when he refused to exercise his ministry at Nineveh. That this prophet was possessed of a holy confidence in God, and a desire for the salvation of his fellow creatures, we have every reason to believe. But we find that neither the one nor the other was sufficiently powerful to engage him in a service, which appeared likely to endanger his reputation among men. Such were also the Apostles before they were endued with power from on high. To every pastor of this character, that expression of Christ, which was once addressed to the most courageous man among his disciples, may be considered as peculiarly applicable: 'Thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.'

'Lukewarmness, false prudence, and timidity, are the chief characteristics by which ministers of this class may be distinguished. Perceiving the excellence of the Gospel in an obscure point of view, and having little experience of its astonishing effects, they cannot possibly discover that religious zeal, which is indispensably necessary to the character they affect to sustain.

'The pious Bishop Massilon, gives the following representation of these unqualified teachers, and the ill effects of their unfaithfulness. 'Manners are every day

becoming more corrupt among us, because the zeal of ministers is daily becoming colder, and because there are found amongst us few apostolical men who oppose themselves as a brazen wall to the torrent of vice. For the most part, we behold the wicked altogether at ease in their sins, for the want of hearing more frequently, those thundering voices which, accompanied with the spirit of God, would effectually rouse them from their awful slumber. The want of zeal, so clearly discernible among pastors, is chiefly owing to that base timidity which is not hardy enough to make a resolute stand against common prejudice, and which regards the worthless approbation of men beyond their eternal interests. That must needs be a worldly and criminal consideration which makes us more anxious for our own glory than for the glory of God. That must truly be fleshly wisdom, which can represent religious zeal under the false idea of excess, indiscretion, and temerity. A pretext this, which nearly extinguishes every spark of zeal in the generality of ministers. This want of courage they honour with the specious names of moderation and prudence. Under the pretence of not carrying their zeal to an excess, they are content to be entirely destitute of it. And while they are solicitous to shun the rocks of imprudence and precipitation, they run, without fear, upon the sands of indolence and cowardice. They desire to become useful to sinners, and, at the same time, to be had in estimation by them. They long to manifest such a zeal as the world is disposed to applaud. They are anxious so to oppose the passions of men, that they may yet secure their praises ; so to condemn the vices they love, that they may still be approved by those they condemn. But, when we probe a wound to the bottom, we must expect to awaken a

degree of peevishness in the patient, if we do not extort from him some bitter exclamation.

‘ Let us not decieve ourselves, continues the same author : If the apostolical zeal, which once converted the world, is become so rare among us, it is because, in the discharge of our sacred functions, we seek ourselves rather than the glory of Christ, and the salvation of souls. Glory and infamy were regarded by the Apostle Paul with equal indifference, while he filled up the duties of his important office. He knew it impossible to please men and to save them ; to be servants of the world, and the servants of Christ. Nevertheless, there are many among us who are seeking to unite these different services, which the Apostle believed to be irreconcilable.

‘ Mons. Rogues agrees with the pious Bishop in condemning those ministers who neglect to copy the example of St. Paul. “ The little piety that is to be found among ministers,” says this excellent writer, ‘ is the most effectual obstacle to the progress of the Gospel. By piety, I mean that sincere and ardent love for religion which deeply interests a man in all its concerns, as well as in everything that respects the glory of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this divine love were found reigning in the hearts of those who proclaim Christ ; if every preacher of the Gospel were enabled to say, with the sincerity of Peter, ‘ Lord ! thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee ; thou knowest that I have no ambition but for thy glory ; and that my highest pleasure consists in beholding the increase of thy kingdom ; we should then perceive the sword of God in their hands like a two-edged sword, cutting asunder the very deepest roots of sin. But as the Gospel is preached more through contention, through

vain glory, and through the desire of getting a livelihood by serving at the altar, than through an ardent zeal to advance the glory of God, hence it is that ministers fall into several errors, giving evident proofs of that indolence and unconcern, which afford matter of scandal rather than of edification.

‘The worldly minister has neither courage nor the tenderness of the true pastor. He is fearful of publishing those truths which are calculated to alarm the careless sinner; and he knows not in what manner to apply the promises of the Gospel for the relief of those who mourn. If ever he attempts to descant upon the consolatory truths of the Gospel, he only labours to explain what is nearly unintelligible to himself; and all his discourses on subjects of this nature, are void of that earnest persuasion, and that unction of love, which characterise the ministers of Christ. On the other hand, his dread of giving offence will not suffer him to address sinners of every rank with the holy boldness of the prophet Samuel:—‘If ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you. If ye still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed.’ The faithful pastor, on the contrary, conscious that the harshest truths of the Gospel are as necessary as they are offensive, courageously insists upon them in the manner of St. Paul:—‘Thinkest thou, O man, that doest such things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Know this, that after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself, wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. For indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil.’ Every transgression under the first covenant, received

just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first begun to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? This ye know, that no unclean person, nor covetous man, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh ; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth,' viz. the Prophet Moses, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven,' viz. the Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore, let us serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.'

'The sermons which our blessed Lord preached were plain, though deep ; sharp as a razor, though smooth as oil ; and the effect was the conversion or the confounding of his hearers. True doctrine will always cause a division beteen the chaff and the wheat of a congregation ; it sifts the worldlings, puts the formalists at a stand, and makes the Pharisees and Sadducees, the secret and open infidels in all ages, to exclaim against the severity and depth of Gospel truths. So that some, unable to bear it, run away from the disagreeable sound, as many of our Lord's disciples did ; or, if they come again, it is to seek an occasion against the preacher, and, if possible, to catch him in his words, as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers tried to do by our Lord himself.

'Now, if the Eternal Wisdom, the lowly, meek lamb of God, who knew how to suit his discourses to the capacity and wants of his followers, could not declare the counsel of God without exasperating many of his hearers,

how can it be expected that we, who have hardly a ray of the wisdom of the Sun of Righteousness, should preach the same Gospel without any of the same inconvenience?'

How important, how absolutely necessary, is this boldness, in order, from heart-felt experience, faithful to preach, and apply the doctrine of repentance, plain to expose the depravity of our fallen nature, that we may arise and tarry not, but with all earnestness flee from the wrath to come. Without this the experience of professors will not rise above a half-awakened state.

'The prescriptions of this wise Physician (Jesus) are excessively severe to flesh and blood, and some of his remedies as violent as our disease. Therefore, except we see the greatness of our danger, we shall beg to be excused from taking the bitter potion. Who can have resolution enough to cut off a right hand, to pluck out a right eye, to take up his cross daily, to deny himself, and lose even his own life, or, what is often dearer, his family reputation? Who, I say, can do this, till a sight of imminent ruin on the one hand, and of redeeming love on the other, makes him submit to the painful injunctions? 'Thou lovely youth, noted in the Gospel for thy harmlessness, I appeal to thy wretched experience. When the Physician of souls, at whose feet thou wast prostrate, commanded thee to sell all and follow him, what made thee go away sorrowful and undone? Not barely thy great possessions, but the ignorance of thy condition; for all that a man hath will he give for his life, when he sees it in immediate danger.

'And, if with the candle of the Lord, you search the Jerusalem of professing Christians, you will perceive that the want of a heartfelt humbling knowledge of their



natural depravity, gives birth to the double-mindedness of hypocrites, and the miscarriages or apostacy of those, who once distinguished themselves in the evangelical race; you will easily trace back, to the same corrupt source, the seemingly opposite errors of the loose Antinomian and the pharisaic Legalist, those spiritual thieves by whom the sincere Christian is perpetually reviled; and, in short, you will be convinced, that if you set your eyes upon a man who is not yet deeply conscious of his corrupt and lost estate, or whose consciousness of it is worn away, you behold either a trifler in religion, a dead-hearted Pharisee, a sly hypocrite, a loose Antinomian, a self-conceited formalist, a scoffing infidel, or a wretched apostate.

‘ If we are by nature in a corrupt and lost state, the grand business of ministers is to rouse our drowsy consciences, and warn us of our imminent danger. It behoves them to “cry aloud and spare not, to lift up their voice like a trumpet,” and show us our transgressions and our sins. Nor are they to desist from this displeasing part of their office till we awake to righteousness and lay hold on the hope set before us.

‘ If preachers, under pretence of peace and good nature, let the wound fester in the conscience of their hearers, to avoid the thankless office of probing it to the bottom. If, for fear of giving them pain, by a timely amputation, they let them die of a mortification. Or, if they heal the hurt of the daughter of God’s people slightly, saying, peace! peace! when there is no peace, they imitate those sycophants of old, who, for fear of displeasing the rich and offending the great, ‘preached smooth things and prophesied deceit.’

‘ This cruel gentleness, this soft barbarity, is attended



with the most pernicious consequences, and will deservedly meet with the most dreadful punishment. "Give sinners warning from me," says the Lord to every minister. When I say to the wicked, the unconverted, "Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him no warning, he shall die in his iniquity," in his unconverted state; "but his blood will I require at *thy* hand."

'The true minister, convinced, both by revelation and experience, that Jesus Christ alone is able to recover diseased souls, employs every effort to bring sinners into the presence of this heavenly Physician, that they may obtain of Him spiritual health and salvation. He is fully persuaded, that he, who is not weary and heavy-laden, will never apply for relief; that he who is not poor in spirit, will constantly despise the riches of the Gospel; and that they, who are unacquainted with their danger, will turn an inattentive ear to the loudest warnings of a compassionate Saviour. His first care, then, is to press upon his hearers the necessity of an unfeigned repentance; that, by breaking the reed of their confidence, he may constrain them with the poor, the miserable, the blind, and the naked, to fall before the throne of divine justice. Whence, after seeing themselves condemned by the law of God, without any ability to deliver their own souls, he is conscious that they will have recourse to the throne of grace, entreating, like the penitent publican, to be justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is in this state of humiliation and compunction of heart that sinners are enabled to experience the happy effects of that evangelical repentance which is well defined in the fourteenth chapter of the Helvetic Confession. "By

repentance," say our pious reformers, "we mean that sorrow or that displeasure of soul which is excited in a sinner, by the word and spirit of God," &c. 'By this new sensibility, he is first made to discover his natural corruption, and his actual transgressions. His heart is pierced with sincere distress. He deplores them before God; he confesses them with confusion, but without reserve; he abhors them with an holy indignation; he seriously resolves, from the present moment, to reform his conduct, and religiously apply himself to the practice of every virtue during the remainder of his life. Such is true repentance. It consists, at once, in resolutely renouncing the devil, with every thing that is sinful; and in sincerely cleaving to God, with every thing that is truly good. But we expressly say, this repentance is the mere gift of God, and can never be effected by our own power.

'Our Lord constantly represented the unregenerate as persons diseased and condemned. 'They that are whole,' said he 'have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Ye are of this world, therefore, I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if you believe not that I am he,' and refuse to observe the spiritual regimen I prescribe, 'ye shall die in your sins.' Except ye repent, ye shall perish.

'It is notorious, that John the Baptist prepared the way of his adorable Master by preaching the same: 'O generation of vipers,' said he to the Pharisees and Sadducees, to the profane and professing part of the nation, 'who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.

‘It is equally well known, that the disciples were instructed by Christ himself to tread in the steps of his forerunner. ‘It behoved,’ said he, ‘Christ to suffer; and that repentance should be preached in his name among all nations.’ Hence, an Apostle was heard to cry out: ‘God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.’ And at other times, the same divine teacher was inspired to write as follows: ‘We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. For we were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.’

‘The same doctrine was constantly held forth by the other Apostles, as well as by St. Paul. In time past, saith St. Peter, ‘we have wrought the will of the Gentiles, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, revellings, &c. The whole world lieth in wickedness, saith the beloved John; and St. James solemnly testifies that every ‘friend of the world is the enemy of God.’

‘This humiliating doctrine, which the world universally abhors, is a light too valuable to be hidden under a bushel. And, till it be raised, as it were, upon a candlestick of gold, we can never hope to see the visible church enlightened and reformed.’

To neglect this, to invite people to embrace the Saviour’s invitation, to urge them to believe in the mercy of God to *penitent* sinners, to offer Christ, to do this and the like to persons who are not deeply sensible of their lost condition, is fraught with incalculable mischief and ruin; seeing, that unless they feel themselves dead in trespasses and sin, they will certainly neglect

the Saviour in one way or the other. They will not come unto Him that they might have life.

‘ Some make no more of the offer of Christ, than the offer of a straw. Were a good bargain put to them, they would forget all their business to accomplish it. But when it is only Jesus Christ and life that they are invited to, they suppose it time enough to think of that; they pray to be excused for the present; or madly suppose that they have already accepted Him. I want words, brethren, to express the greatness of the danger of these Laodicean sinners, who say, ‘ I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.’ I shall only observe, that, if the blood of Abel cried to heaven for vengeance against Cain, the blood of Christ will one day cry much louder against these unbelievers, who, by slighting it, spill it afresh every moment.

‘ Others termed presumptuous unbelievers; who, seeing what sins they have committed, and it may be, having now and then some touches of sorrow for them, catch notionally at Christ, and hoping that they have Him already, shut Him out for the future, and so in fact reject Him. This is the case of most of those who are only half awakened. The prophet Micah describes them in these remarkable words:—The sin of Israel is great, and unrepented of, yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, ‘ Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us.’ You will never hear people that are in this dangerous state, complain of their utter want of faith; and they will not be beaten off from the notion, that they are true, but weak believers. Let them hear never so much of their real misery, and see never so much of their desperate sinfulness, yet they will hold their imaginary trust in Christ: As if one

could savingly trust in Christ, before he has truly experienced the bitterness of sin, and been clearly convinced of unbelief. Therefore, these also (though they profess with their lips and conversation to come to Christ for life); yet, in fact, keep at a distance from Him with their heart, as well as desperate and careless unbelievers. This was the case of the foolish virgins. They made great profession of going to meet the Bridegroom, as well as the wise ones, and really thought they had oil in their vessels, or faith in their hearts; but, being mistaken, they justly perished for their wilful delusion.

‘ Another class of unbelievers, who make Christ complain, that they will not come unto Him that they might have life, is that of those who are convinced they have not life,—they perceive, in general, that they are in a bad state,—they have some confused sight of their sins, and of their need of Jesus Christ,—but after all, they do not know whether they had best come to Him or not. They see some good in a Saviour, for which they fain would have Him; such as peace, grace, pardon, and heaven: But they see many things in his offer of life that overbalances those advantages. They must bid adieu to all their foolish pastimes, and vain diversions:—The drunkard must renounce his cups, and the silly virgin her love of dress: The gamester must part with his cards and dice, and the jovial man with his foolish talking and jesting: The covetous man must cut off his right hand, that is, give to the poor what he had laid up for himself: The unclean person must pluck out his right eye, that is, part with the gratifying of some base lust, which is dearer to him than a right eye; and Nicodemus must confess Jesus

openly, even before Pontius Pilate. All must take up the cross of their Saviour, and follow Him through evil report, slander, and cruel mockings. Now all this is very hard to flesh and blood; and people who are disturbed by the dread of the cross, and the fear of man, being drawn by the love of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, of course remain irresolute and unsettled in their principles: They will lean this way, and that way; now they put their hand to the plough, and the next moment they look back: To-day resolve to sell all, to buy the pearl of great price; but to-morrow they think it is venturing too far, and begin to hope that they can be saved at a lower rate. With the young man in the Gospel, they will ask you, in a fit of devotion, 'What they must do to inherit eternal life?' But if you tell them, that all the good they have done from their youth up, or can do to their dying breath, will stand them in no stead without Christ; that they must sell all, renounce all their sins, without excepting the most delightful, and fashionable ones, and follow their Saviour through the regeneration; though they have perhaps not much of this world's goods, yet they will go away sorrowful, as well as he that had great possessions. If ministers could show them some by-way, to steal into heaven without bearing the reproach of the cross, and denying the flesh, then they would embrace the Gospel: If we could teach them how to follow the world and Christ at the same time, and how to die the death of the righteous, after having lived the life of the worldly, they would rank us among the best preachers: If we gave them to understand that they might compound the matter between Christ and Belial, and keep upon fair terms with the world and God at

the same time, they would be converted this very day. But from such half-conversions, good Lord, deliver us and them! Of such half-conversions our Saviour speaks thus:—‘He that receiveth the seed into stoney places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: But as he hath not root in himself, he dureth only for a while: For when tribulation, temptation, or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and bye he is offended,’ and falleth back to the world. These sinners are the most unhappy of all: They neither enjoy the pleasures of sin, nor those of Godliness: They have neither earth nor heaven. For as they halt between Baal and God, and serve neither faithfully, they are rewarded by neither. They are a kind of mongrels in religion, a monstrous compound of Christianity and worldliness: One day they cry, ‘Hosannah to the Son of David,’ and seem to confess him in his doctrine; and the next day, drawn away, or overawed by the Scribes and Pharisees of the age, they join the general cry, “Away with Him, his doctrine is too strict. His conditions are too hard: His offers are too full of restriction: At this rate, who can be saved?” Thus these also, in the end, are found despisers of Christ; as well as desperate sinners, careless sinners, and presumptuous sinners; all refusing to come unto Him, that they might have life upon his own terms.’

How fatal is lukewarmness in religion! ‘One sort of lukewarm persons assent to the whole Bible, talk of repentance, faith, and the new birth, commend holiness, plead for religion, use the outward means, and profess to be and do more than others. But they yield to carelessness, self-indulgence, fear of man, dread of reproach, and of loss, hatred to the cross, love of ease, and the



false pleasures of a vain imagination. These say, do, and really suffer many things; but rest short of the true change of heart, the one thing needful being still lacking. They are as the foolish virgins, without oil, or the man not having a wedding garment.

‘Of these, the Lord hath said, ‘He will spew them out of his mouth:’ But, Why so severe a sentence?’ Because (1.) Christ will have a man hearty and true to his principles; he looks for truth in the inward parts. As a consistent character, he commended even the unjust steward. (2.) Religion admits of no lukewarmness, and it is by men of this character, that his name is blasphemed. (3.) A bad servant is worse than a careless neighbour; and a traitor, in the guise of a friend, is more hateful, and more dangerous, than an open enemy: Judas was more infamous than Pilate. (4.) The cold have nothing to trust to; and harlots and publicans enter the kingdom of heaven, before moral or evangelical pharisees, who, in different degrees, know their Master’s will, and do it not; ‘They shall be beaten with many stripes.’

‘Christ represents the want of an holy fervour as the grand reason why lukewarm Christians excite in him the utmost detestation and abhorrence. An entire chapter in the Gospel is employed to teach us, that sins of omission will constitute the principal cause of a sinner’s condemnation at the last day. The slothful servant is cast into outer darkness; not for having robbed another of his talents, but, for the non-improvement of his own. The foolish virgins are excluded from the marriage feast; not for having betrayed the bridegroom, but, because they were unprepared to receive him.’

If such are the delusive and ruinous consequences of self-ignorance, does it not behove every minister of the Gospel to sound the depths of the human heart, and lay them open to the view of those to whom they address themselves? As Mr. Wesley says, "And this is necessary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe, nor repent to this day. Look round about, and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation! And, how can you walk and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks, when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the prophet did, when he looked upon Hazael, and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate exhortation. O, then, for God's sake, and for the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation." And, again: the happy results of a contrary state of things, is another powerful motive for such a procedure.

'No sooner is the disease rightly known, than the neglected Jesus, who is both our gracious Physician and powerful Remedy, is properly valued, and ardently sought. 'All that' thus 'seek, find;' and all that find Him, find saving health, eternal life, and heaven.

'Bear your testimony with me, ye children of Abraham and of God, who see the brightness of a Gospel 'day and rejoice.' Say; what made you first wishfully 'look to the hills, whence your salvation is come,' and fervently desire to behold the sin-dispelling beams of the 'Sun of Righteousness?' Was it not the deep, dismal night of our fallen nature, which you happily discovered, when, awaking from the sleep of sin, you first saw the delusive dreams of life, as they

appear to the dying? What was 'the Desire of nations' to you, till you felt yourselves lost sinners? Alas! nothing; perhaps, less than nothing; an object of disgust or scorn. When 'the pearl of great price' was presented to you, did you regard it more than the vilest of brutes an Oriental pearl? And, as if it had not been enough to look at it with disdain, were not some of you ready to "turn again and rend," after the example of snarling animals, those who affectionately made you the invaluable offer?

'But, when the storm that shook Mount Sinai overtook your careless souls, and ye saw yourselves sinking into an abyss of misery, did ye not cry out, and say, as the alarmed disciples, with an unknown energy of desire, 'Save, Lord, or we perish?' And, when conscious of your estate, ye began to believe, that 'He came to seek and to save that which was lost,' how dear, how precious was He to you in all his offices? How glad were you to take guilty, weeping Magdalene's place, and wait for a pardon at your High Priest's feet! How importunate, in saying to your King, as the helpless widow, 'Lord, avenge me of mine adversary,' my 'evil heart, of unbelief!' How earnest, how unwearied in your applications to your Prophet, for heavenly light and wisdom! The incessant prayer of blind Bartimeus was then yours, and so was the gracious answer which the Lord returned to him; you 'received' your spiritual 'sight,' And, O! What saw you then? The sacred 'book unsealed! Your sins blotted out as a cloud! The glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ;' and "the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers!"

'Then, and not till then, you could say from the

heart, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Then you could cry out with his first disciples, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! We are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.' 'We trusted in Him, and are helped: therefore our hearts danceth for joy, and in our song will we praise him.' 'To Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.'

'Nor will the blossoms of heavenly 'peace' and 'joy' only diffuse their divine fragrancv in your soul; and 'the fruits of holiness' will grow together with them 'to the glory of God,' and the profit of mankind. And thou wilt not be the last, thou fair, thou blushing Humility, to bend all the spreading branches of the tree of righteousness.' No; we cannot be vain, or despisers of others, when we see that we are all corrupted, dying shoots of the same corrupted, dead stock. We cannot be self-righteous, when we are persuaded that the best fruit which we can naturally produce is only splendid sin, or vice coloured over with the specious appearance of virtue. We must lie prostrate in the dust, when we consider the ignominious cross where our Divine Surety hung, bled, and died, to ransom our guilty souls.

'A genuine conviction of our corruption and demerit

thus striking at the very root of our pride, necessarily fills our hearts with inexpressible gratitude for every favour we receive, gives an exquisite relish to the least blessing we enjoy, and teaches us to say, with the thankful patriarch, 'I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies;' and, as it renders us grateful to God, and all our benefactors, so it makes us patient under the greatest injuries, resigned in the heaviest trials, glad to be reproved, willing to forgive the faults of others, open to acknowledge our own, disposed to sympathise with the guilty, tender-hearted towards the miserable, incapable of being offended at any one, and ready to do every office of kindness, even to the meanest of mankind.

'As soon as we can discover our spiritual blindness, we mistrust our own judgment, feel the need of instruction, modestly repair to the experienced for advice, carefully search the Scriptures, readily follow their blessed directions, and fervently pray that no false light may mislead us out of the way of salvation.

'A right knowledge that 'the crown is fallen from our head' will make us abominate sin, the cause of our ruin, and raise in us a noble ambition of regaining our original state of blissful and glorious righteousness. It will set us upon an earnest inquiry into, and a proper use of, all the means conducive to our recovery. Even the sense of our guilt will prove useful: by helping to break our obdurate hearts, by embittering the baits of worldly vanities, and filling our souls with penitential sorrow. 'Before honour is humility.' This happy humiliation makes way for the greatest exaltation: For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him

also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite to 'fill the hungry with good things,' and 'beautify the meek with salvation.'

'If these advantages, which exceed the worth of earthly crowns, necessarily result from the proper knowledge of our corrupt and lost estate, who, but an infatuated enemy of his own soul, would be afraid of that self-science? Who, but an obstinate Pharisee would not esteem it, next to the knowledge of Christ, the greatest blessing which Heaven can bestow upon the self-destroyed, and yet self-conceited children of men?

There is also the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, which is evidently very little understood, and consequently very much neglected, but which should be explained and enforced as our privilege, and as a test of our adoption. Merely to name it, to speak upon it slightly—just sufficient to show that the preacher does not deny the doctrine, or to treat it with any degree of indifference, is trifling with the most sacred things; whereas, the preacher of the Gospel should be able to testify to the truth of the doctrine by his own happy experience, and out of the fulness of the heart his mouth *will* speak.

That exemplary Methodist, good old Mr. Carvoss, speaks thus upon the subject:—"My mind has recently been pained to meet with so many who have long been professors of religion, and still know nothing of the interest in Christ. Of justification by faith, and the witness of the Spirit, they seem just as ignorant as they had never heard a Gospel sermon in their lives. This blessed witness of the Spirit, both in justification and sanctification, is what I see the necessity of more

man ever. For my own part, I do not see what progress professors of religion can make without this. Did I say religion? Can they be deemed the professors of true religion at all, till they so believe as to have the witness in themselves? Till they have this Gospel with, they can only be denominated "seekers of salvation." It is extremely painful to me to reflect on the multitudes who are stopping short of their inestimable privilege. Again, "This morning I have felt an increased vigour of spirit, and a fresh resolution to devote myself more fully unto the Lord, and to urge on others the great necessity of their receiving the witness of the Spirit. What I mean by the witness of the Spirit, Mr. Wesley very clearly explains in his excellent sermon on this subject. "The testimony of the Spirit," says he, "is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out; and that I, even I, am a child of God. But let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate from the fruits of it." And again, "To-day I had a conversation with one of the members of our society, on the subject of the witness of the Spirit. Like too many others, he was resting short of this privilege. Finding he had not read Mr. Wesley's sermons on this subject, I earnestly requested him to procure and read them as soon as possible. What a thousand pities it is, that the excellent sermons of Mr. Wesley are so little known or read among many of the Methodists.'

Mr. John Pawson, in a sermon preached at Nottingham, Jan. 23, 1797, says, "As it was the



design of God, in sending Christ into the world, to give us the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins, he certainly will fulfil his own design. And, as God has declared that he will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and remember our sins and iniquities no more, so he will abide by his own most gracious declaration, and he who by faith lays hold upon the promise, can receive to his seal that God is true. He, therefore, who does not experience pardon sealed upon his heart by the Word and Spirit of God, is not yet possessed of the faith of the Gospel."

"If I had a mind," said the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, "to hinder the progress of the Gospel, and to establish the kingdom of darkness, I would go about telling the people that they might have the Spirit of God and yet not feel it; or, which is much the same, that the pardon which Christ procured for them, is already obtained by them, whether they enjoy a sense of it or not."

"Let this Gospel axiom be impressed on your inner soul," says the Rev. W. E. Miller, "that you must be saved by faith, and by faith only. This will teach you even the want of true faith, and when, by the help of the Holy Spirit, it is given, without which all our efforts will be in vain, you will receive the evidence of your salvation, even the witness of the Spirit."

The following extracts from the writings of Mr. Fletcher, I think will be very much in place here. 'The knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins, the assurance of faith, and the peace of God passing all understanding, are the experienced blessings of the converted; as certainly as a guilty conscience, the gnawing of worldly cares, the working of evil tempers, the tumults of unbridled appetites, and the uproars

rebellious passions, are the experienced curses of the unconverted.

‘Undoubtedly assurance is inseparably connected with the faith of the Christian dispensation, which was not fully opened till Christ opened his glorious baptism on the day of Pentecost, and till his spiritual kingdom was set up with power in the hearts of his people. Nobody, therefore, can truly believe, according to this dispensation, without being immediately conscious both of the forgiveness of sins and of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is a most important truth, derided, indeed, by fallen Churchmen, and denied by Laodicean Dissenters; but of late years gloriously revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him. A truth this, which cannot be too strongly, and yet too warily insisted upon in our lukewarm and speculative age.’

And, lest the doctrine should be supposed to imply, that all are in a state of damnation who have not the witness of the Spirit, this excellent writer goes on to say,

‘If it be urged that the Spirit of God witnesses to all sincere seekers of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost, that they are in a damnable state, till they feel the pardoning “love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them;” I demand proof; I deny the fact, and assert that the Divine Spirit can no more bear witness to an accepted, mourning Cornelius, than it can give testimony to a palpable contradiction. The truth is, our unbelieving fears and awakened hearts are very prone to surmise the worst, and we are very apt to take their surmisings for divine impressions, even when we “bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.” I doubt not but

St. Paul himself, in his agony of penitential grief, when he spent three days and three nights in fasting and prayer, had many such gloomy despairing thoughts ; but they were certainly lying thoughts, as well as those which David wisely checks in some of his Psalms. Who would dare to say, that Ananias found the Apostle in a damnable state, though he found him without a sense of sins forgiven, as appears from the direction which he gave him, ‘ Arise, why tarriest thou ? Wash away thy sins, calling upon (and consequently believing in) the name of the Lord ?’

“ Judicious Mr. Baxter, by a variety of strong arguments, shows, that to represent assurance, or the kingdom of God in the Holy Ghost, as essential to all true faith ; and promiscuously to shut up, in a state of damnation, all those to whom that ‘ kingdom is not yet come with power,’ is both cruel and unscriptural. See the arguments in his ‘ Confession of Faith,’ from p. 189 to 214.”

But it will appear by the following, that he (Mr. Fletcher) in no way gave up the doctrine, but considered it of the utmost importance.

‘ May we not sufficiently guard the Christian dispensation, by constantly affirming : 1st. That all Christian believers “ have now the witness in themselves.” 2nd. That those who have it not, either never had Christian faith, which is emphatically called faith in the Gospel ; or, that they know only the “ baptism of John ;” or, that, with the unsettled Galatians, they are actually “ fallen from grace,” that is, from the Christian dispensation ; and now live “ under the law,” that is, in the darkness of the Jewish dispensation : supposing they are not quite departed from God by indulging know-

in. 3rd. That if they do not press after the faith of assurance, they are in the utmost danger of losing their talent of grace ; like the young man whom Jesus loved, and who nevertheless went away sorrowful when he was unwilling to give up all, and follow Jesus without reserve ; or, like those thousands of Israelites, “ whom the Lord *saved out of* the land of Egypt, and whom he afterwards destroyed,” when “ they believed not ” the word, by which they were to be *saved into* the land of promise.’

This, well understood and judiciously applied, must be attended with immense benefit to the Church of Christ. However controverted, yet it is one of the precious doctrines of the Gospel, and held in high estimation by all Wesleyan Methodists, properly so called.

Much has been said in the shape of derision, about Christian perfection, the peculiar doctrine of Wesleyan Methodism. Nevertheless, it is ‘ our calling’s glorious hope.’

‘ If Christian perfection is (next to angelic perfection) the brightest and richest jewel, which Christ purchased for us by his blood ; if it is the internal kingdom of God ruling over all ; if it is Christ fully formed in our hearts, the full hope of glory ; if it is the fulfilment of the promise of the Father—viz., “ the Holy Ghost given unto us, to make us abound in righteousness, peace, and joy, through believing ; ” and, in a word, if it is the Shekinah, filling the Lord’s human temples with glory ; is it right that we should slight it ? ’ He who denies the doctrine is no Wesleyan Methodist, he who does not preach it is not a Wesleyan Methodist preacher—is not a Gospel minister. Mr. Wesley being judge, ‘ Who is a Gospel Minister ? ’ says he, ‘ let us

consider this important question calmly, in the fear and in the presence of God. Not every one that preaches justification by faith ; he that goes no farther than this that does not insist upon sanctification also, upon all the fruits of faith ; upon universal holiness ; does not declare the whole counsel of God : and consequently is not a Gospel minister. Who, then, is such ? Who is a Gospel minister in the full scriptural sense of the word ? He, and he alone, of whatever denomination, that does declare the whole counsel of God ; that does preach the whole Gospel, even justification and sanctification, preparatory to glory. He that does not put asunder what God has joined ; but publishes alike, Christ dying for us, and Christ living in us. He that constantly applies all this to the hearts of the hearers, being willing to spend and be spent for them ; having himself the mind which was in Christ, and steadily walking as Christ also walked ; he, and he alone, can with propriety be termed a Gospel minister.

‘ Let it be particularly observed, if the Gospel be “ glad tidings of great salvation which shall be unto all people ;” then those only are, in the full sense, Gospel ministers who proclaim the great salvation—that is, salvation from all (both inward and outward) sin, in all the mind that was in Jesus Christ ; and also proclaim offers of this salvation to every child of man. This honourable title is therefore vilely prostituted when it is given to any but those who testify that God willeth all men to be saved, and to be perfect, as the Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.

Mr. Fletcher describes Mr. Wesley's preaching thus :—His manner of preaching the Fall and the Recovery of Man, is attended with a peculiar advantage ; it is clo-

and experimental: He not only points out the truth of those doctrines, but presses his hearers to cry to God, that they may feel their weight upon their hearts. Some open those great truths very clearly, but let their congregations rest, like the stoney-ground hearers, in the first emotions of sorrow and joy which the word frequently excites. Not so Mr. Wesley: He will have true penitents 'feel the plague of their own hearts, travail, be heavy laden,' and receive 'the sentence of death in themselves,' according to the glorious 'ministration of condemnation.' And, according to 'the ministration of righteousness, and of the Spirit which exceeds in glory,' He insists upon true believers knowing for themselves, that Jesus 'hath power on earth to forgive sins:' and asserts, that they taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,' and that they 'are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and the divine nature; the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God.' The next fundamental doctrine in Christianity, is that of Holiness of Heart and Life, and no one can here accuse Mr. Wesley of leaning to the Antinomian delusions, which 'make void the law through' a speculative and barren 'faith.' On the contrary, he appears to be peculiarly set for the defence of practical religion; it is, I grant, his misfortune (if indeed it be one) to preach a fuller salvation than most professors expect to enjoy here; for he asserts that Jesus can 'make clean' the inside as well as the outside of his vessels unto honour; that He hath power on earth 'to save his people from their sins; and that his blood cleanses from all sin,' from the guilt and defilement, both of original and actual corruption. He constantly exhorts his hearers

to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Saviour till, by a strong and lively faith, they can continually 'reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' He tells them, that he who committeth sin is the servant of sin; that, our old man is crucified with Christ; that, the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;—that if the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed. And he is persuaded, that He who can do far exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, is able to furnish us with the perfect love which casts out fear; that we, being 'delivered out of the hands of our enemies,' may have 'the mind which was in Christ,' be righteous as the man Jesus was righteous, and 'walk as He also walked,' and be, in our measure, 'as He was in the world;' He as the stock of the tree of righteousness, and we as the branches, 'having our fruit' from Him 'unto holiness,' and 'serving God without fear in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.' This he sometimes calls Full Sanctification, the state of 'fathers in Christ,' or the 'glorious liberty of the children of God;' sometimes a being 'strengthened, established, and settled,' or being rooted and grounded in love; but most commonly he calls it Christian perfection: A word, though used by the Apostles in the same sense, cannot be used by him without raising the pity or indignation of one-half of the religious world; some make it the subject of their pious sneers, and godly lampoons; while others tell you roundly, "They abhor it above every thing in the creation."—What he calls perfection, is nothing but the rich cluster of all the spiritual blessings promised to believers in the



Gospel; and, among the rest, a continual sense of the virtue of Christ's atoning and purifying blood, preventing both old guilt from returning, and new guilt from fastening, upon the conscience; together with the deepest consciousness of our helplessness and nothingness in our best estate, the most endearing discoveries of the Redeemer's love, and the most humbling and yet ravishing views of his glorious fulness.'

The following quotations will further show Mr. Wesley's sentiments, and the view he took of the necessity of preaching on this subject. 'It is well known that he has exhibited and vindicated this doctrine in his writings, with his accustomed perspicuity and force; but our point is to recall attention to his opinion of its connection with the growth, stability, and depth of the work of God in Christian societies, and the consequent necessity of announcing it.

'In the minutes of Conference for the year 1768, we find the following directions to the preachers:—"That we may all speak the same thing, I ask once for all, Shall we defend this perfection, or give it up? You will agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, by the love of God and our neighbour filling our hearts. The Papists say, 'This cannot be obtained, till we have been refined by the fire of purgatory.' The Calvinists say, 'Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part.' The old Methodists say, "It may be attained before we die: a moment after, is too late." Is it so, or not? You are all agreed we may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled; but as to the circumstance. Is the change gradual, or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification,

a growing grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And, if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change; there must be a last moment wherein it does exist; and a first moment wherein it does not. ‘But should we, in preaching, insist both on one and the other?’ Certainly we must insist on the gradual change; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul, the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God; whereas, just the contrary effects are observed, whenever this expectation ceases. They are ‘saved by hope;’ by this hope of a total change, saved with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or rather, decreases daily. Therefore, who ever would advance the gradual change in believers, should strongly insist on the instantaneous.’

‘In a letter to his brother Charles, dated Congleton, March 25th, 1772, he remarks:—“I find almost all our preachers, in every circuit, have done with Christian perfection. They say, they believe it, but they never preach it; or, not once in a quarter. What is to be done? Shall we let it drop, or make a point of it?”

“O what a thing it is, to have the care of souls. You and I are called to this; to save souls from death; to watch over them as those that must give account.

If our office implied no more than preaching a few times in a week, I could play with it: so might you. But how small a part of our duty (yours as well as mine) is this! God says to you, as well as to me, 'Do all thou canst, be it more or less, to save the souls for whom my Son died.' Let this voice be ever sounding in our ears; then shall we give up our account with joy. Come, bestir yourself, and lay aside delay. I am ashamed of my indolence and inactivity. The good Lord help us both. Adieu!"

'To Mr. Merryweather, of Yarm, he writes:—"When Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God, and, consequently, little addition to the society, and little life in the members of it. Therefore, if Jacob Rowell is grown faint, and says but little about it, do you supply his lack of service. Speak, and spare not. Let not regard for any man induce you to betray the truth of God. Till you press the believers to expect full salvation now, you must not look for any revival."

'To Mr. Brackenbury he writes:—"I am glad brother D—— has more light with regard to full sanctification. This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly, he appears to have raised us up."

'To Miss Ritchie:—"From our brethren in various parts of England and Ireland, I have very pleasing accounts of the uncommon blessing which many received at the time of renewing their covenant with God. I am glad to hear that you at Otley had your share. That point, entire salvation from inbred sin, can hardly be insisted upon, either in preaching or

prayer, without a particular blessing. Honest Isaac Brown firmly believes this doctrine, that we are to be saved from all sin in this life. But I wish, when opportunity serves, you would encourage him,—1. To preach Christian perfection, constantly, strongly, and explicitly. 2. Explicitly to assert and prove, that it may be received now: And, 3, (which, indeed, is implied therein), that it is to be received by simple faith.

‘ To Miss Roe he writes:—“ In the success of Mr. Leeche’s preaching, we have one proof of a thousand, that the blessing of God always attends the publishing of full salvation as attainable now, by simple faith. You should always have in readiness that little tract, ‘ The Plain Account of Christian Perfection.’ There is nothing that would so effectually stop the mouths of those who call this, ‘ a new doctrine.’ All who thus object, are really (though they suspect nothing less) seeking sanctification by works. If it be by works, then certainly it will need time, in order to the doing of the works. But, if it be by faith, it is plain, a moment is as a thousand years. Then God says (in the spiritual as in the natural world), “ Let there be light, and there is light.”

Much more very excellent matter on this subject might be produced; but sufficient has been extracted to show the estimation in which Mr. Wesley and the early Methodists held this all-important doctrine. ‘ This doctrine (says Mr. Wesley) is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, and, for the sake of propagating this chiefly, he appeared to have raised us up.’ And he lamented the tardiness of the preachers (in his day) in fulfilling their commission. And whether we are not all, preachers and people, verily guilty in this respect in the present day, I leave

to the candour of those who understand the subject, to decide.

There is certainly equal reason at the present time for declaring the truths of the Gospel with all that unadorned simplicity, and plain boldness, that ever marked its delivery. Although it is true, there is a vast extension in the attainment of knowledge, various and mighty developments of the power of intellect, great refinement of manners, a very general profession of regard for religion; yet mankind is the same, with regard to sinful nature, as when Mr. Wesley lived.

The lust of the flesh; the lust of the eye; the pride of life; the love of the world and the things of the world; and the friendship of the world; the avoiding the cross of Christ; self-seeking, &c., still predominate. Yea, it is still an awful truth, that the world lieth in the wicked one; that the carnal mind is enmity against God; and that man is still earthly, sensual, and devilish—hateful, and hating one another; sin is just the same abominable thing that God hateth, and Satan is the same roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour. And the efficient means to be used as an antidote for all this, are the same as when the Lord most eminently honoured Mr. Wesley in his work.

‘Mammon is still the God of a large proportion of our men of business. It cannot perhaps be said, that a godless philosophy is a leading characteristic of our literary and scientific men; but in a majority of cases philosophy is separated from revealed truth. Never was so much attention paid to “natural theology;” but some of the men who make the greatest noise on this subject, by their silence concerning the Bible, which contains the principles of all that is really valuable in

their speculations, too strongly intimate that they have no faith in that holy and inspired book. Mighty efforts are now made, especially by means of the press, to circulate what is called "useful knowledge;" but, in the publications which are sent forth avowedly for this purpose, the doctrine of "Christ crucified," is not found. This is a sufficiently obvious intimation that there is, in the estimation of the parties concerned, no real "use" in this "knowledge," even though St. Paul prized it above every other, and preached it to both Jew and Gentile as the most important of all acquirements.

'It is usual with many, who are destitute of true religion, to esteem some among their sinful companions as moral and well-disposed men: But, were they themselves to be really converted, their error, in this respect, would soon become apparent. Upon daring to oppose any torrent of impiety with the zeal of their heavenly Master, instead of finding among their associates an natural disposition to real virtue, they would meet with indisputable proofs, in spite of a thousand amiable qualities, that all unregenerate men resemble one another in their enmity against God. Yes; whether they inhabit the banks of the Thames, or the Seine, the lake of Genesareth, or that of Geneva; they are, in the sight of God, as filthy swine, trampling under foot the pearl of the Gospel, or like 'ravening wolves,' outrageously tearing in pieces the Lamb of God.

'It might, perhaps, have been objected, that this portrait is overcharged, had not Christ himself, who is the immutable Truth and unsearchable Love, pencilled on the gloomiest traits observable in it. Following such a guide, though we may give much offence, yet we can never err.



‘Happy would it be for us, if our fall manifested itself only by some transient advantages of sense over reason. But, alas! the experience of the best demonstrates the truth of Isaiah’s words, ‘The whole head is sick.’

‘To say nothing of the gross stupidity, and unconquerable ignorance, that keeps the generality of mankind just above the level of brutes; how strong, how clear is the understanding of men of sense in worldly affairs! How weak, how dark in spiritual things! How few liots are there, but can distinguish between the shadow and the substance, the cup and the liquor, the dress and the person! But how many learned men, to this day, see no difference between water-baptism and spiritual regeneration, between the means of grace and grace itself, between the form and power of godliness!’ At our devotions, is not our mind generally like the roving butterfly; and at our favourite diversions, and lucrative business, like the fastening leech? Can it not fix itself on anything, sooner than on ‘the one thing needful;’ and find out any way, before that of peace and salvation?

And not only so: In the church itself may be found a awful amount of error and corruption.

Mr. Fletcher, in his remarks respecting the conduct of Mr. Wesley, in charging the preachers to ‘take heed to their doctrine,’ makes the following observations; as Mr. Wesley had so expressed himself, as a reason for this charge:—

‘You know, by sad experience, that at this time we are particularly in danger of splitting upon the Antinomian rock. Forms, and fair shows of godliness, deceive us. Many, whom our Lord might well compare to ‘whited sepulchres,’ look like angels of light when



they are abroad, and prove tormenting friends at home. We see them weep under sermons; we hear them pray, and sing with the tongues of men and angels; they even profess the faith that removes mountains; and yet, by and bye we discover, they stumble at every mole-hill; every trifling temptation throws them into peevishness, fretfulness, impatience, ill-humour, discontent, anger, and sometimes into loud passions.

‘Relative duties are by many grossly neglected. Husbands slight their wives, or wives neglect and plague their husbands; children are spoiled, parents disregarded, and masters disobeyed; yea, so many are the complaints against servants professing godliness, on account of their unfaithfulness, indolence, pert answering again, forgetfulness of their menial condition, insolent expectations, that some serious persons prefer those who have no knowledge of the truth, to those who make a high profession of it.

‘Knowledge is certainly increased; many run to and fro after it, but it is seldom experimental; the power of God is frequently talked of, but rarely felt, and too often cried down under the despicable name of frames and feelings. Numbers seek, by hearing a variety of Gospel ministers, reading all the religious books that are published, learning the best tunes to our hymns, disputing on controverted points of doctrine, telling or hearing church news, and listening to, or retailing spiritual scandal. But, alas! few strive in pangs of heartfelt convictions; few ‘deny themselves and take up their cross daily;’ few ‘take the kingdom of heaven by the holy violence’ of wrestling faith, and agonizing prayer; few see, and fewer live in, the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ In a word, many say, ‘Lo! Chris-

s here ; and lo ! He is there ;' but few can consistently witness that ' the kingdom of heaven is within them.'

' The consequences of this high, and yet lifeless profession are as evident as they are deplorable. Selfish views, sinister designs, inveterate prejudice, pitiful bigotry, party spirit, self-sufficiency, contempt of others, envy, jealousy, making men offenders for a word—possibly a scriptural word too, taking advantage of each other's infirmities, magnifying innocent mistakes, putting the worst construction upon each other's words and actions, false accusations, back-biting, malice, revenge, persecutions, and a hundred such evils prevail among religious people, to the great astonishment of the children of the world, and the unspeakable grief of the true Israelites that yet remain among us.

' But this is not all. Some of our hearers do not even keep to the great outlines of heathen morality. Not satisfied practically to reject Christ's declaration that ' it is more blessed to give than to receive,' they proceed to that pitch of covetousness and daring injustice as not to pay their just debts ; yea, and to cheat and to extort, whenever they have a fair opportunity. How few of our societies are there where this, or some other evil, has not broken out and given such shakes to the ark of the Gospel, that, had not the Lord wonderfully interposed, it must, long ago, have been upset ?

The same excellent writer further says, ' To speak the melancholy truth, how few individuals are free from practical Antinomianism ! Setting aside their attendance on the ministry of the word, where is the material difference between several of our genteel believers and other people ? Do we not see the sumptuous furniture in their apartments, and fashionable elegance in their

dress? What sums of money do they frequently lay out in costly superfluities, to adorn their persons, houses and gardens.

‘Wise heathens, by the help of a little philosophy saw the impropriety of having any useless brittle vessels about them; they broke them on purpose, that that might be consistent with the profession they made of seeking wisdom. But we, who profess to have ‘found Christ the wisdom of God,’ purchase such vessels and toys at a high rate; and, instead of hiding them for shame, as Rachel did her Teraphim for fear, we ‘write our motto over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall;’ and any man that fears the God of Daniel may, upon studying the Chinese characters, make out Antinomianism.

‘Our Lord, whose garment does not appear to have been cut in the height of the fashion, as it was made without seam, informs us that they who wear ‘soft clothing and splendid apparel,’ are in kings’ houses. But, had He lived in our days, He might have found them in God’s houses; in our fashionable churches or chapels. There you may find people, professing to believe the Bible, who so conform to this present world as to wear gold, pearls and precious stones, when no distinction of office or station obliges them to it, in direct opposition to the words of two Apostles: ‘Let not their adorning,’ says St. Peter, ‘be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.’ ‘Let them adorn themselves in modest apparel,’ adds St. Paul, ‘not with curled hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.’ The plain nervous language of the Church of England is worthy of notice here. After mentioning ‘the round attires of the head,’ exposed by Isaiah, she says: No les

rule is the vanity used among us. For the proud and haughty stomachs of the daughters of England are so maintained with divers disguised sorts of costly apparel, that, as Tertullian saith, there is left no difference of apparel between an honest matron and a common trumpet. Yea, many care not what they spend in disguising themselves, ever desiring new toys, and inventing new fashions. Therefore, we must needs look for God's fearful vengeance from heaven, to overthrow our pride, as he overthrew Herod, who, in his royal apparel forgetting God, was smitten of an angel, and eaten up of worms.

‘But some vain women will object: ‘all which we do, in decking ourselves with gay apparel, is to please our husbands!’ O most shameful answer, to the reproach of thy husband! What couldst thou say more to set out his foolishness, than to charge him to be pleased with the devil's attire? Nay, nay, this is but a vain excuse, of such as go about to please (themselves and) others, rather than their husbands. She does but deserve scorn, to set out all her commendation in Jewish and Heathenish apparel, and yet brag of her Christianity; and sometimes she is the cause of much deceit in her husband's dealings, that she may be the more gorgeously set out to the sight of the vain world. O thou woman, not a Christian, but worse than a Pagan, thou settest out thy pride, and makest of thy indecent apparel the devil's net to catch souls. Howsoever thou perfumest thyself, yet cannot thy beastliness be hidden. The more thou garnishest thyself with these outward blazings, the less thou carest for the inward garnishing of the mind. Hear, hear what Christ's holy Apostles write.

Then follow these passages of St. Peter and St. Paul:—

And again : ‘ The wife, a Heathen, being asked why she wore no gold ? she answered, that she thought her husband’s virtues sufficient ornaments. How much more ought every Christian to think himself sufficiently garnished with our Saviour Christ’s heavenly virtues. But perhaps some will answer, that they must do something to show their birth and blood. As though those things (jewels and finery) were not common to those who were most vile ; as though thy husband’s riches could not be better bestowed than in such superfluities. As though when thou wast christened, thou didst not renounce the pride of this world, and the pomp of the flesh. If thou sayest that the custom is to be followed, I ask thee Whose custom should be followed ? Of the wise, or of fools ? If thou sayest of the wise, then I say, follow them ; for fools’ customs, who should follow but fools. If any lewd custom be used, be thou the first to break it ; labour to diminish it, and lay it down, and thou shalt have more praise before God by it, than by all the glory of such superfluities. I speak not against convenient apparel, for every state agreeable, but against the superfluity, whereby thou and thy husband are compelled to rob the poor to maintain thy costliness. Hear how the holy Queen Esther setteth out these goodly ornaments as they are called, when, in order to save God’s people she put them on : ‘ Thou knowest, O Lord, the necessity I am driven to, to put on this apparel, and that I abhor this sign of pride, and that I defy it as a filthy cloth.

—*Hom. against excess of apparel.*

‘ Multitudes of professors, far from being convinced

of their sin in this respect, ridicule Mr. Wesley for bearing his testimony against it. The opposition he does make to that growing branch of vanity, affords matter of pious mirth to a thousand Antinomians. Isaiah could openly reprove the 'haughty daughters of Zion, who walked with stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and tinkling feet.' He could expose 'the bravery of their fashionable ornaments, their round ties, like the moon, their chains, bracelets, head bands, rings, and earrings.' But some of our humble Christian ladies will not hear a reproof from Mr. Wesley, on the head of dress. They even laugh at him as a pitiful legalist. And yet, O the inconsistency of the Antinomian spirit! they call Isaiah the evangelical prophet!

The excellent Mrs. Rogers, writing to one who had backslidden from the good way, speaks thus :—'Have you not, in what is called little things, conformed to the world? Such as fashionable adorning of the body, even in immodest, as well as costly array? whereas, the command is plain and positive, and easy to be understood. Now, consider a moment, after (contrary to checks of conscience) indulging yourself in any of these things, could you pray as before? nay, were even your desires after God and spiritual things as lively and vigorous? Ah no! the Spirit of God was grieved, and he moved not upon your spirit; he left you to yourself, and you neglected duty more and more, till now, I fear, you can at times plead with the world you had forsaken, against singularity, against shutting yourself up from carnal company, and subjecting yourself to the sneers and disdain of those who see no beauty in Christ and salvation. Alas! how changed! how trifling did you once account the scoffs and frowns of such; yea, not worth a thought,

when you first felt your state as a lost sinner. Then you would cry,

‘ Let earth and all its trifles go,  
Give me, O Lord, Thyself to know ;  
Give me Thy precious love.’

‘ Finery is often attended with an expensive table, at least with such delicacies as our purse can reach. St. Paul ‘ kept his body under, and was in fastings often ;’ and our Lord gives us directions about the proper manner of fasting. But, in general, we look upon fasting much as we do upon penitential flagellation. Both equally raise our pity. We leave them both to Popish devotees. Some of our good old church people will yet fast on Good Friday ; but our fashionable believers begin to cast away this last scrap of self-denial. Their faith, which should produce, animate, and regulate works of mortification, goes a shorter way to work ; it explodes them all.

‘ Alas ! few of us know what it is ‘ to cry out of the deep,’ to pray and believe, till, in the name of Jesus, we force our way beyond flesh and blood, come within the reach of the internal world, conflict in an agony with the powers of darkness, vanquish Apollyon in all his attacks, and continue wrestling till the day of eternity break upon us, and the God of Jacob ‘ bless us with all spiritual benedictions in heavenly places.’ John Bunyan’s Pilgrim, the Old Puritans, and the first Quakers, had such engagements, and gained such victories ; but they soon got over the hedge of internal activity, into the smooth easy path of Laodicean formality. Most of us, called Methodists, have already followed them ; and when we are in that snare, Satan scorns to conflict with us ; puny flesh and blood are more than a match for us.



We fall asleep under their bewitching power, and begin to dream strange dreams. We are left to our delusions, and we think ourselves in the kingdom of God, when we are only in a fool's paradise.

‘At midnight, I will rise and praise thee, said once a pious Jew ; but we pious Christians, who enjoy both health and strength, are imprisoned within our bed-curtains long after the sun has ‘called the diligent to their labour.’ When the fear of the Lord was in us, ‘the beginning of wisdom,’ we durst ‘not so confer with flesh and blood.’ We had then a little faith ; and, so far as it went, it showed itself by our works. Then we could, without hesitation, and from our hearts, pray ‘stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by Thee be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We believed there was some truth in these words of our Lord :—‘Except a man forsake all that he hath, deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple. He that will save his life, shall lose it ; and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire. Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for I say unto you, that many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able ;’ because they will seek to enter in at the wide, rather than the strait gate ; the Antinomian or Pharisaic, rather than the evangelically legal gate of salvation. But now ‘we known better,” say some of us ; we have got over our scruples and legality. We can ‘conform to this present world ;’ cleave to, instead of ‘forsaking all we have,’ and even grasp what we have not. What a

strange way this of 'growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ crucified!'

'Daniel informs us, that he 'made his petition three times;' and David, that 'he offered up his praises seven times a day.' Once, also, like them, we had fixed hours for private prayer and self-examination, for reading the Scriptures, and meditating upon them, perhaps upon our knees. Now, we scarcely ever, for any length of time, solemnly bend the knee before 'our Father who sees in secret.' And, instead of leaning on Christ's bosom in all the means of grace, we take our graceless rest on the bosom of that painted Jezabel Formality.'

If we are backward in performing that leading work of piety—secret prayer—is it a wonder, if, in general, we are averse to every work of mercy that costs us something beside a little of our superfluous money? And, would to God some did not even grudge this, when it is pressed out of their purses, by the importunate addresses of those who beg for the poor! However, we give yet, at the door of a church (or chapel), or at the communion; whether with indifference or joy, whether out of custom, shame or love, we seldom examine. But that important branch of St. James's 'pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father, which consists in visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions,' is, with many, almost as much out of date as a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto.

'O ye forsaken sons of poverty, and ancient daughters of sorrow, who pine away in your desolate garrets or cellars, without fire in winter, destitute of food, physic, or nurse in sickness! raise a moment your emaciated bodies, wrapt up in thread-bare blankets, if you are possessed of any such a covering, and tell me—tell the

world, how many of our gay professors of religion have sought and found you out in your deplorable circumstances! How many are come to visit, in you, and to worship with you; "The Man of Sorrows," who once lay on the cold ground in a bloody sweat! when did they make your bed in your sickness?' When have they kindly inquired into all your wants, sympathised in all your temptations, supported your drooping heads in a fainting fit, revived your sinking spirits with suitable cordials, gently wiped your cold sweats, or mixed them with their tears of pity?'

Alas! You sometimes find more compassion and assistance in your extremity, from those who never 'name the name of Christ,' than from our easy, Antinomian, Laodicean believers. Their wants are richly supplied; that is enough. They do not inquire into yours, and you are ashamed or afraid to trouble them with the dismal story. Nor indeed would some of them understand you, if you did. Their uninterrupted abundance makes them as incapable of feeling for you, as the warm inhabitants of Ethiopia are to feel for the frozen Icelanders\*.

\* Mr. Wesley seems to have been deeply convinced of the ruinous nature of such insensibility. 'When I was at Oxford,' says he, 'in a cold winter's day, a young maid (one of those we kept at school), called upon me. I said you seem half-starved. Have you nothing to cover you but this thin linen gown? She said, Sir, this is all I have. I put my hand in my pocket, but found I had scarce any money left, having paid away what I had. It immediately struck me, Wilt thy Master say, well done, good and faithful steward? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid? See thy expensive apparel in the same light—thy gown,

While the table of some believers (so-called) is alternately loaded with a variety of delicate meats, and rich wines, what have ye to sustain sinking nature? Alas! One can soon see your all of food and physic! A pitcher of water stands by your bed-side upon a stool, the only piece of furniture left in your wretched apartment. The Lord God bless the poor widow that brought it you, with her two mites! Heaven reward a thousand-fold the loving creature that not only shares with you, but freely bestows upon you ‘all her living, even all that she has;’ when *they* forget to inquire after you, and send you something out of their luxurious abundance! The Son of Man, once forsaken by all the disciples, and comforted by an angel, made her bed in the time of sickness! And a waiting band of celestial spirits ‘carry her charitable soul into Lazarus’s bosom in the awful hour of dissolution! I had rather been in her case, though she could not confidently profess the faith, than in yours, O ye caressed believers, who let your affluence overflow to those that have more need to learn frugality in the school of scarceness, than to receive bounties which feed their sensuality and indulge their pride.

‘And ye, women, professing godliness, who enjoy the comforts of health and abundance, in whose streets there is no complaining, no decay, whose daughters are as the polished corners of the temple! when did you ever want visitors? Alas! Ye have too many for the good they do you, or that you do them. Does not your conversa-

hat, head-dress! everything about thee, which cost more than christian duty required thee to lay out, is the blood of the poor! O be wise for the time to come! Be more merciful! more faithful to God and man! more abundantly adorned with good works!’

tion, which begins with the love of Jesus, terminate in religious scandal; as naturally as your soul, which once 'began in the spirit, ends now in the flesh?' O that your visitors were as ready to attend work-houses, jails, infirmaries, and hospitals, as they are to wait upon you! Oh that, at least, like the Dorcases, the Phœbes, and Priscillas of old, you would teach them cheerfully to work for the poor, to be the free servants of the Church, and tender nurses of the sick! Oh that they saw in you all, how the holy women, 'the widows who were widows indeed,' formerly entertained strangers, washed the saints feet,' instructed the younger women, and continued night and day in prayer! But alas! 'the love of many,' once warm as the smoking flax, 'is waxed cold,' instead of taking fire and flaming. They who once began 'to seek the profit of many,' now seek 'their own' ease, or interest—their own honour, or indulgence.

'Almost all, when they come to the foot of the hill Difficulty, take their leave of Jesus as a guide, because it leads on through spiritual death to the regeneration. Some, disliking that 'door,' like 'thieves and robbers, climb up' an easier way. And others, leaving the highway of the cross—make for themselves and others broad and downward roads to ascend the steep hills of Zion!

'These easy paths are innumerable, like the people that walk in them. O that 'my eyes, like David's, did run down like water, because men,' professing godliness, 'keep not God's law' and are even offended at it! Their mouth talketh of vanity, they dissemble with their double heart, and their right hand is a right hand of sloth, or positive iniquity.' O that I had the ten-

derness of St. Paul, 'to tell you even weeping, of those who mind earthly things;' those 'who have sinned and have not repented;' those who, while they boast they 'are made free by the Son of God, are brought under the power of many things;' whom foolish desires, absurd fears, undue attachments, imported superfluities and disagreeable habits, keep in the most ridiculous bondage !'

Mr. Fletcher, after taking this view of things, makes the following confession — a confession worthy the imitation of the preachers of the present day.

'But whence springs (says he) this almost general Antinomianism of our congregations? Shall I conceal the sore, because it festers in my own breast? Shall I be partial? No, in the name of Him, who is "no respecter of persons," I will confess my sin, and that of many of my brethren. Though I am the least, and (I write it with tears of shame) the most unworthy of them all, I will follow the dictates of my conscience and use the authority of a minister of Christ. I, Balaam, a false prophet, took in good part the reproach of his ass, I should wrong my honoured brethren and fathers, the true prophets of the Lord, if I feared their resenting some well-meant reproofs, which I first level at myself, and for which I heartily wish there was no occasion.

'Is not the Antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers? Does it not become us to take the greatest part of the blame upon ourselves, according to the old adage, "Like priest, like people?" Is it surprising that some of us should have an Antinomian audience? Do we not make or keep it so? When do we preach such a practical sermon as that of our Lord

on the Mount, or write such close letters as the Epistles of St. John? Alas! I doubt it is but seldom. Not living so near to God ourselves as we should, we are afraid to come near to the consciences of our people. The Jews said to our Lord, 'In so saying, Thou reproachest us;' but now the case is altered, and our auditors might say to many of us, "In so saying, you would reproach yourself."

'Some prefer popularity to plain dealing. We love to see a crowd of worldly-minded hearers rather than a little flock, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' We dare not shake our congregations to purpose; lest our five thousand should, in three years' time, be reduced to an hundred and twenty.

'Luther's advice to Melancthon—"So preach, that those who do not fall out with their sins, may fall out with thee," is more and more unfashionable. Under the pretence of drawing our hearers by love, some of us softly rock the cradle of carnal security in which they sleep. For "fear of grieving the dear children of God," we let 'buyers and sellers, sheep and oxen,' yea, goats and lions, fill the temple undisturbed. And because "the bread must not be kept from the hungry children," we let those who are wanton make shameful waste of it, and even allow 'dogs,' which we should beware of, and noisy parrots, that can speak shibboleth, to do the same. We forget that God's children 'are led by his Spirit,' who is 'the Comforter' Himself; that they are all afraid of being deceived, all 'jealous for the Lord of Hosts;' and, therefore, prefer a preacher who 'searches Jerusalem with candles,' and cannot suffer God's house to be made a 'den of thieves,' to a workman who 'white-washes the noisome sepul-



chres he should open, and 'daubs over with untempered mortar the bulging walls' he should demolish.

'The old Puritans strongly insisted upon Person Holiness, and the first Methodists upon the New Birth; but these doctrines seem to grow out of date. The Gospel is cast into another mould. People, it seems, may now be 'in Christ,' without being 'new creatures' and 'new creatures,' without casting 'old things away.' They may be God's children, without God's image; and 'born of the Spirit,' without the fruits of the Spirit. If our unregenerate hearers get orthodox ideas about the way of salvation in their heads, evangelical phrases concerning Jesu's love in their mouths, and a warm zeal for our party and favourite forms in their hearts; without any more ado, we help them to rank themselves among the children of God.

'They say they "will have nothing but Christ." And who could blame them, if they would have Christ in all his offices? Who would find fault with them, if they would have Christ, with his poverty and self-denial, his reproach and cross, his Spirit and graces, his Prophets and Apostles, his plain apparel and meek followers? But, alas! It is not so. 'They will have what they please of Christ, and that too as they please.'

Such being the state of things at a time when many eminent instruments existed to diffuse the light and power of pure religion, and when the Lord remarkably made bare his arm in the conversion of sinners; does it not become us, at the present time, to review the whole affair, and take heed as to our conduct, success, and prospects. It is indisputably plain that the same means that were used by the ear-

Methodists are not now in use as they were with them. Now there must be such a change since then, as to render their use unnecessary; or we are using other means equally efficient; or we have declined, and are not in so prosperous a condition as we ought to be. It is very distressing to hear what is sometimes said, especially by persons professing godliness, about the degeneration in the times, as though the 'march of intellect' had discovered another method of rendering man- and acceptable in the sight of God, and securing eternal happiness, than that adopted by God Himself. This method always made manifest in every revival of religion; every 'revival of the simple power of primitive christianity;' its spirit is, Are you converted now? Have you the direct Spirit's witness now? Are you sanctified now? Are you filled with love, growing in grace, pressing onwards, and now ready for heaven?—It pierces through all the artful disguises of mere formality; it exposes all the subtle excuses of declining usefulness. It looks through the pompous blaze of pulpit oratory, and cries out, 'I must *see* and *feel* effects. I must see souls awakened, converted, sanctified; I must feel quickened, revived, blessed.'—It is not satisfied with having the *head* instructed, it requires the *heart* to be touched, the power of the Spirit to descend, the kingdom of heaven brought nigh, and God dwelling within! Light conversation, evil-speaking, party disputes, fly before it. Its language is prayer, its action *faith*, and its effects are *union* and *love*.

It is the greatest folly, and a ruinous deception to imagine, that all that system coming under the designation of that ambiguous expression, 'respectable,' is Wesleyan Methodism. We seem to act as though Methodism, in the first instance, was merely an attack

upon the profaneness, immorality, and prejudices of the age; and, having succeeded and gained a footing in the society, that then we were to rest from the toilsome and unthankful efforts which marked its early periods. On the same means must be used now as at the first; men are the same, the Gospel is the same, and our duties are the same.

According to the present state of things, the office of the cross has ceased. A young man is noticed giving evidence of grace and gifts to preach the Gospel; he is seriously spoken to, and invited to try his abilities. He does not make much out of it at first, it is true; but he is among his friends, who kindly bear with him, and hope he will mend; by reason of use he gains some possession, now he is very hopeful, he is considered made of improvable stuff, and recommended as a proper person for the ministry. No doubt, he is subsequently examined with much care and seriousness upon the particulars, which are considered necessary. But he is unlettered; well, he has nothing alarming to apprehend from this: He is sent to the 'Institution,' and finishes his training. He now comes forth inspired with confidence; it may not be the confidence of faith in the Lord Jesus, for help to declare the whole counsel of God, faith for the outpouring of his Spirit upon the people, faith to look for and expect fruit, and that will not rest satisfied without. But it may be the confidence that he can deliver a discourse without any grammatical, philosophical, or theological error. Thus is he equipped; it may not be, to face the ungodly throng, to brave through their scoffs, their gibes and menaces, the missiles, &c.: No, he has a quiet and comfortable home provided, none ever make him afraid; when he leaves it to speak for his gracious Master, he has no apprehensions.

on of being molested by the way. He ascends the pulpit in the sable garb of seriousness, and finishes his task with credit, nay, he is applauded for such a well-regulated discourse, and apt illustrations, and no doubt the result of much genius, learning, and study. He can, therefore, leave the pulpit with confidence. There are none waiting to mark the preacher that they may assail him, none to single him out thus : No, he has the politeness, the hand, and the invitation of the affluent to partake of their hospitality ; he may not have the pleasure of a carriage to convey him and his host ; but presently he finds himself in a richly-furnished apartment, with an ample spread table, bearing an abundance of the good things of this life, and with all, there is the pressing entreaties to eat and drink, and make his heart glad. He may return such friendship by entertaining the family circle, with' anecdotes of his missionary or itinerant career.—Or, he may show his learning by describing the nature and properties of the various fossils, &c., which adorn the shelves.—Or, he may take the opportunity to recommend the institutions of Methodism, perhaps hand them a report, and succeed in obtaining a subscriber. He is not obliged to mar the cheerfulness of the family, by speaking too closely about spiritual things. Not obliged to put such unpleasant questions, Do you know that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned your sins ? Do you live in the enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit ? Are you going on unto perfection ? Or, do you possess that perfect love that casts out fear ? Not obliged to annoy them by putting perplexing questions, as to the knowledge of themselves ; the evil of their hearts ; the entire pollution of their nature ; and distress them, by pressing upon them the necessity to flee from the wrath to come, and seek a present

Saviour. Or inquire: Do you regularly attend your class, and all the means of grace, as far as in you lies? Do you pray for, and with, your family? How do you manifest your love to Christ? Do you endeavour to avoid every appearance of evil, in word and deed? Forsake all connections that have a tendency to worldly-mindedness? Do you avoid conformity to the world by denying yourself all superfluous dress, furniture, &c. Denying yourself all inordinate eating and drinking? Taking up your cross daily, by reproving, in a Christian spirit, those who may have sinned in your presence and ever watching for a proper opportunity to speak a word for your gracious Lord? Do you get all, save all, and give all you can? According to those all-important directions of Mr. Wesley? O tell me all your heart. I shall have to give an account of your souls, and remember you will have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of all you do. Not obliged to do these things, and many more of the same unpleasant character. Still he may enjoy a fair reputation, as an interesting gentleman, a man of considerable information, if not deep research; a very desirable companion, and with all, he will bear the honourable title of, Wesleyan Methodist Minister. He need not hasten away from his friendly host, to visit the sick, or poor, but stay till.—But perhaps he may have to meet classes for tickets. There is nothing in that to ruffle his mind: if the members come for their tickets, well: If not, the Leader will take their tickets; even to half of his class and more; so the Minister may not know, or even speak, to half of the members of his flock. But I will not travel any further into this afflictive part of the subject; but leave it to the reflections and prayers of those who truly love Wesleyan Methodism.

Let it not be supposed that this is meant as a personal reflection upon the ministers; when we see happy exceptions, we rejoice. But it is the system in which such deficiencies are tolerated; showing thereby, the warped condition of Methodism; that is the ground of mournful affliction\*.

\* 'Mr. Wesley observes, 'I am not afraid that the people, called Methodists, should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion, without the power. And this, undoubtedly, will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

'The essence of it' (Methodism), 'is holiness of heart and life; the circumstantial all point to this. And as long as they are joined together, in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But, if even the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost. And if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what remains will be dung and dross.

It nearly concerns us to understand how the case stands with us at present. I fear, wherever riches have increased (excluding the exceptions), the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality. And these cannot but produce riches. But, as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world, in all its branches.

How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay-tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists, in every place, grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

Is there no way to prevent this? This continual declension of the religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal; we *must* exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and save



I know it may be objected by our ministers, 'We have not time to fulfil that which you insist upon as our duty; we are so engaged otherwise, our time is fully occupied.' It would be unseemly to assume a dictatorial position and speak our individual sentiments; but I think we are at liberty, from what Mr. Wesley has said, to imagine what *he* would say under such circumstances, if he were now among us. Are we not justified in supposing he would say something like the following?—

'You must have time, or give up the work. What do you do with your time? Do you rise at four or five o'clock? Do you spend no more time than is necessary with any one, especially with the rich? Do you husband your time, or do you while it away by trifling conversation, or reading, or pursuing some branch of human knowledge, not at all necessary to your vocation? If you would obtain such knowledge, do it by self-denial, but do not do it in the precious time which ought to be devoted to visiting and teaching the flock of Christ, over which you are placed, and for whose welfare you are responsible. Acquiring knowledge is good, but saving souls is better. Remember you are sent into this circuit to save souls; let nothing divert you from this; keep close to your work, be diligent in little things as well as great, be instant in season, out of season. Do not spend a number of days in travelling to and from a distant circuit, merely that you may occupy two or three hours

all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich! What way, then (I ask again), can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. Those who *gain all they can*, and *save all they can*, will likewise *give all they can*, then the more they gain the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.'



on a platform to advocate the missionary cause for the purpose of increasing its funds. Let each circuit manage this matter themselves, and there are sufficient numbers of lay brethren, whose zeal and ability are quite equal to the case. But give yourself wholly to the ministry, and to prayer; leave not this, your duty, to serve tables, most especially out of your circuit. Do not leave your circuit, particularly if you disappoint a congregation thereby; to issue a plan of preaching appointments, and not fulfil those appointments, is destructive of the people's confidence. And now, while I am speaking my mind freely to you, as I have often done before, you will bear with me if I give you some general advice; you know I speak not of contention, but from a pure love of the cause of Methodism. Let me intreat you to avoid that popularity that would lead you from your circuit merely to obtain money. It is quite possible that a man may be very popular as instrumental in raising large pecuniary collections by preaching, and yet not at all popular for converting sinners. Do not eat the bread of one circuit, while, at the same time, you give your labours to another. Guard, with all possible care, against manifesting any anxiety about your salary in the circuit; let there exist no grounds to suspect, that part of your object is to secure your quarterage. Catch a portion of that noble, disinterested spirit, which animated the Apostle Paul; who, while he in the spirit of love, boldly asserted his claim upon the church, yet, at the same time laboured to assure the people that he sought not theirs, but them. Give them to feel, by your addresses, your spirit, your self-denial, and labours among them, that your gracious Lord and Master has taught you how to abound, and how to suffer need, in all

things therewith to be content ; so that He may be glorified in the salvation of sinners. For who are you, that you are not to suffer privations, tribulation, persecution and affliction in various forms? You would be but very little qualified to direct, encourage, and comfort others if you yourself were not experimentally acquainted with these things. What if some of the fiery trials of former days were allotted us ; are you to shrink, are you to murmur and kick against these things, or in any way avoid the cross you are called to take up ; nay, rather should you not rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake? ' There was a time when there was no provision made for preachers, or preachers' wives, nor any funds among the Methodists. He that had a star might take it, go without it, or stay at home. The societies at that time provided the preachers with those things which were necessary, without any fixed allowance. Do not affect the gentleman, either in dress, or manner, or conversation, or in any superfluous nicety. If you do, you will scatter destruction all around. If you like to wear a white neckcloth, and a black dress, do ; but banish the notion that they are necessarily connected with success in preaching the Gospel. Make no display of gold ornaments &c. about your person. While, on the one hand, you avoid that clownish, ignorant rudeness which is disgraceful, on the other hand, keep at the utmost distance from every species of vanity, or it will eat as doth a canker the very vitals of religion. O ! consider your real nature and character. You are a fallen spirit, saved from eternal perdition by the mere mercy of God ; and now you are sent to other fallen spirits, to warn them of their dangerous condition, and to proclaim to them offers of mercy. Get a deep sense of this ; it will

keep you in the dust of self-abasement, and give you in some proper measure, according to the language of the Apostle, to 'know no man after the flesh.' Do not rest short of that love and holy fervour which is so essential to your success as a teacher of religion. And let it not only accompany your public addresses, but carry it into the leaders' meetings, &c., &c. Be not one man in the pulpit, and another elsewhere. Suffer no excitement to be raised in your circuit merely to obtain money; in so doing, you may incite some to give that which is not their own; be not anxious in raising money so as to occupy much time therein; lay it upon the members to do this; they know that the institutions of Methodism cannot be supported without it. Be faithful to those you think can afford it; but, with all the tenderness of Christian love, inquire into their circumstances; judge not from appearances; ask them if they are any way involved, or if they can pay every man his own? Do not be afraid of doing this, you may be as an angel of the Lord to them. To unbosom their minds to you, may be their deliverance; they may take your advice, use timely means, and escape the ruin of their circumstances. O how much scandal and reproach might we avoid as a body, if we were diligent and faithful in this. Again, I say, let nothing divert you from your work: the saving souls. If you are successful in this, you will increase your pecuniary means. When a man is converted to God, he gives God his heart, and, as an old writer says, 'all will follow the heart;' it is the meat and drink of those who love the Lord Jesus, to give of their substance to his cause. Be a firm disciplinarian in every particular. In your quarterly visitations of the society, do not give the leader a number of tickets to hand to his'

absent members ; see them, and give them their tickets yourself ; give no tickets to any that manifest an indifference about coming to receive them, or who habitually neglect their class meeting ; remove them till they feel it a privilege to meet in class. Better to have six precious souls, who agree as touching the things concerning the kingdom of God, than sixty careless, unstable, half-awakened persons. And see to it that the leaders are truly men of God, sound in the faith held forth in the Methodist doctrines, examples to the society with which they are connected, of Christian spirit and diligence, and setting an example of piety at home and in the world. Let there be no want of class room in that branch of the circuit in which you are more immediately located ; open your house for the accommodation of classes. Be not a respecter of persons ; refrain from exalting any of your brethren in the ministry one above another, on account of talents. One may have vigorous mind and body, while another has neither ; the one may be exciting multitudes by his eloquence, while the other, in his obscurity, is administering the word of counsel and comfort ; zealous for the Lord, using his talents with fidelity ; and, in fact, the real dimensions of the one may be found to be as diminutive as the other, if the rule of sound judgment were applied. Remember, the Lord looketh at the heart ; all the rest is according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. The faithful improvement of the two talents, in the estimation of our blessed Lord, was equally worthy of the 'well done,' as the faithful improvement of the five. value the regard and friendship of those who esteem me on account of my christian virtues a greater treasure

than I would the universal applause of the Church and the world, for my talents. If ever you fall into such temptation, you run the double hazard of engendering vanity and depreciating virtue. And then, as it regards the choice of leaders, stewards, trustees, or any other labourer you may want in the vineyard of the Lord, let sterling piety be the invariable criterion by which you decide. The love of God shed abroad in the heart, is infinitely more valuable than all the learning or wealth of the world; if united, they render the individual preferable; but separate, the one is but dross compared to the other—nay worse: to set wealth and learning, without sterling piety, to conserve the Church, is to employ a prolific source of mischief, which is sure to blight or destroy the harvest. Avoid those marks of distinction that the world calls politeness. Let not the poor be led, through your courtesy to the rich, to think you forget them; it is a most blameable course of conduct to pass by the poor, while the wealthy are courted and caressed; it renders the person very despicable who thus degrades himself, whatever his pretensions may be, and must be abomination in the sight of God. ‘ Upon what foundation is founded the humiliating distinction which is generally made between the rich and the poor? Was Christ manifested in a state of earthly grandeur? Did He not chiefly associate with the poor? Far from flattering the rich, did He not insinuate that they would, with the utmost difficulty, enter into the kingdom of God? Did He not affirm, it were better for a man to be cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, than to offend the poorest believer? Did He not declare, that He would consider the regard shown to the meanest of his followers as though He

himself had been the immediate object of it? When St. James assures us, that 'he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way,' performs the best of all possible good works, because, by preventing a multitude of sins, he places the soul in the road to every virtue,—can this declaration be supposed to lose any of its force when applied to the soul of a poor man? Are not the lowest of men immortal as the most elevated? Did not Christ humble himself to the death of the cross for the poor, as well as the rich? 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?' And, finally, were the angels less ready to convey the soul of perishing Lazarus to Paradise, than that of wealthy Abraham? Perish then for ever that unchristian prejudice which dishonours the poor, nourishes the pride of the rich, and leads us to the violation of that great command, by which we become as guilty as though we had transgressed the whole law, the spirit of which is love.'

Avoid idleness as you would poison. A healthy state of soul is incompatible with idleness. The moment you begin to hanker after ease, that moment you open a floodgate to let in a torrent of evil, calculated to drown your own soul, inundate the Church, and swamp every institution connected with it; sweep away every vestige of holy fervour, and only leave a barren waste, which will ultimately prove the slough of self-deception for formal professors to wallow in. I therefore beseech you fly idleness. Let there be no situation among you in which you will have but little to do and feel but little responsibility; no situation in which you may in any measure forego your duties in preaching or pastoral visitation without censure from your

brethren. Keep at the work that you profess God has called you to do—saving souls. And let it be your happy experience always to say, ‘I labour on at thy command, and offer all my works to Thee;’ and your prayer be, ‘Lord, if it be thy will, let me cease at once to work and live.’ Leave the superficial, ambiguous, lifeless writings which so much abound at the present day, under the designation of religious publications, and return to the study of the good old Methodist books; they contain the breathings of the most excellent of the earth; they wrote out of the fulness of their hearts what the Lord had done for them, and what He is now willing to do for you, and all who seek Him with their whole hearts: and distribute these books among the people, do not give reports of our institutions instead.

What else Mr. Wesley would say, I leave to the reasonable imagination of those who understand Wesleyan Methodism. We know that he was in the habit of addressing the ministers under his care in plainer terms than this; and yet ‘they rejoiced that they had such a faithful pastor;’ and I venture to believe it would be even so now, and not only so, but the preachers would have to rejoice that they laboured among a people who would endure such plain dealing.

Well, suppose it is plain that Wesleyan Methodism has declined; and that it is no breach of Christian charity to consider the ministers, (though an amiable body of men,) as very far short of the exalted character of the early Wesleyan Methodists; what shall be done, brethren? Shall we muster in a body, form ourselves in battle array, arm ourselves with those destructive though cowardly weapons—abuse, calumny, and reproach, and hurl them at the heads of



the Ministers? And, if that does not succeed in subduing them, shall we endeavour to starve them into obedience to our notions of reform? I will not only ask, Is this scriptural? but, Is it rational? If they are vile and unworthy men, what good will it do to scandalise them, and starve them? If they succumb for a morsel of bread, would they not thereby be even more despicable than their warmest opponents represent them already to be? And I would ask, with what part of christian experience does such a course of conduct accord? Would a poor broken-hearted penitent act thus? Suppose one came to your class with tearful eyes, and inquired what he must do to be saved; you felt satisfied he was sincerely groaning for redemption; you rejoiced over him under a conviction that he was not far from the kingdom. What would you think of him, if you saw him the next night on a platform boisterously dictating measures for reform? Would you not have some misgivings respecting his professed contrition? But suppose you endeavoured to show him the way to a present salvation, and the Lord blessed the word spoken; he finds mercy, peace with God, the love of God shed abroad in his heart; he comes to your class with cheerful countenance, with glad heart and free, and tells you and his class-mates what the Lord has done for him; he not only declares his deliverance from the sense of guilt and condemnation, but out of the abundance of his heart, he tells of that love that fills his soul; he is as a little child, clothed with humility, meek, gentle, willing to sit at the feet of you all. Can you imagine the amount of astonishment you would feel if on the morrow you saw him engaged in writing a paragraph for publication in a newspaper, in

which was inserted the real or imaginary faults of the Ministers, for circulation through the length and breadth of the land? If a new convert will not do so, surely if he holds fast his confidence, retains his first love, and goes on unto perfection, he will not. I do confess that I am at a loss to know, in what part of his Christian career, such conduct would meet with the plaudit of the Judge of all the earth, 'well done.'

No good soldier of Jesus Christ will unfurl the banner of scandal, and emblazon thereon the failings of his brethren, and hoist it to the gaze of an ungodly world. No *Wesleyan Times* have ever yet arrived, or ever will, when, upon Wesleyan principles, such conduct could be justified. No *Watchman*, who watches for the welfare of Zion, will ever scatter firebrands of provocation and discord, by dealing in crimination and recrimination. No, no; the love of God was never made manifest in such a manner as that. The true *Christian Witness* is one who reflects the gracious image of that adorable exemplar, who, 'when He was reviled, reviled not again;' one that speaks evil of no man, but possesses that love that behaveth itself not unseemly, seeketh not her own, and hopeth all things; one who is a living epistle known and read of all men—possessing the wisdom that is from above (which) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality (or wrangling), and without hypocrisy.

'Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.' How contrary is all this to the spirit of Christianity!

'Above all things,' says St. Peter, "have fervent charity among yourselves."—"Little children," says St.

John, 'love one another.' Sweet precepts! but how far are we from regarding them, whilst we give to bitter zeal, or to indifference, the place allotted to the communion of saints, and to burning love! Had the apostolic injunctions a due effect upon us, how would the fervent charity, which victorious faith kindles, set fire to the chaff of our idle contentions, and make us ashamed of having so departed from the Gospel, as to give the world to understand (if men may judge of our doctrine by our conduct), that the Scriptures exhort us to fall out one with another, and to mind charity less than every thing; whereas it enjoins us to mind 'above all things,' above all honour, pleasure, and profit,—yea, above all knowledge, orthodoxy, and faith. We are commanded to 'glorify God with one heart and one mouth.' Our lips should be instruments of praise, ever tuned to celebrate the Prince of Peace,—ever ready to invite all around us to the Gospel feast; to the feast of divine and brotherly love. To neglect the labour of love is bad: But how much worse is it to be as sounding brass, as a tinkling cymbal, as an infernal kettle-drum, used by the accuser of the brethren, to cast professors from the good fight of faith?

'Unspeakable is the mischief done to the interests of religion by the divisions of Christians: And the greater their profession is, the greater is the offence given by their contests. The weak are offended, and the lame turned out of the way. The godly mourn, and the wicked triumph: Bad tempers are fomented, the hellish flame of party zeal is blown up, and the souls of the contenders are pierced through with many sorrows.

'This is not all: The Spirit of God is grieved, and

the conversion of sinners prevented. How universally could the work of reformation have spread, if it had not been hindered by this growing mischief! How many thousands of scoffers daily say, Can these devotees expect we should agree with them, when they cannot agree among themselves? And, indeed, how can we reasonably hope, that they should give us the right hand of fellowship, if we cannot give it to one another? By this,' saith our Lord, 'shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye love one another.' Continual disputes are destructive of love; and the men of the world, seeing us cherish such disputes, naturally conclude, that we are not the disciples of Christ, that there are none in the world, that the Gospel is only a pious fraud or a fine legend, and that faith is nothing but fancy, superstition, or enthusiasm.

'True charity embraces all men, because, being made of one blood, they compose but one vast family, of which God Himself is the great Parent. And here our Lord permits us not to exempt even our most cruel enemy. 'Ye have heard,' saith He, 'that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and,' manifesting a concern for their souls, as well as an attention to their persons, pray for them that despitefully hate and persecute you, that ye may be the children of our Father, which is in heaven: For He maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good.

'From these expressions it appears, that our Lord would have his disciples to possess a charity not only extraordinary in some degree, but altogether divine. On every point of quality, he requires, that it should be equal

to the inexpressible love of the Father; as a drop taken from the ocean is of the same nature with those mighty waves, that roll over the unfathomable deep. 'If ye love them,' saith He, 'that love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans so?' Be ye, therefore perfect (in charity), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'—This celestial grace runs through the whole circle of Christian virtues. Thus, when St. Paul enumerates the fruits or effects of the Spirit, he points to charity, as the foremost of the train: And when St. Peter recounts the virtues which a Christian should add to his faith, he concludes with the finishing graces of 'brotherly kindness and charity.' Both these ideas are afterwards united by the great Apostle, when he exhorts the Colossians 'put on charity, as that band of perfectness,' without which the Christian character would be incomplete, and which may be said to include all the graces of the Spirit, as a thousand ears of corn are united in the same sheaf by one common band.

'It was with these sublime views of charity, that St. Paul thus addressed his converts:—'By love serve one another; for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another (in obedience to Christ's command), hath fulfilled the law.' 'Charity never faileth;' inasmuch as it is the source of heavenly joy.' Now (in the Church militant), abide faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity, which shall eternally animate the Church triumphant.'

No doubt this is the end of the commandments. The purpose and design of the Gospel: And to diffuse this is the aim of every faithful preacher of Christ.

The true minister is happily initiated into this grand mystery of charity. He can say, with Peter, 'Lord! Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee.' He can testify with Paul, 'That the love of Christ constraineth me.' And, at other times, when the emotions of his heart are too tender for utterance, tears of gratitude and joy silently cry out, like those of dissolving Mary, 'Lord, Thou art worthy of all my love, since Thou hast graciously pardoned all my sin.' Animated with this love, he publicly insists upon universal charity, with all the ardour of St. John, testifying that it flows from the knowledge of God, and must be considered as the root of Christian obedience. 'Hereby,' saith he, 'perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but (according to the example of Christ) 'in deed and in truth.' 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,' and remember, he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.'

'Charity is consoling, because it assists and encourages us in the discharge of our several duties. When we glow with affection to God and our neighbour, works of piety and charity are performed, not only without pain, but with heart-felt sensations of secret delight. This is the love of God, that we keep 'his commandments;' and, to those who sincerely love Him, his commandments are not grievous.' Thus a tender mother loses her repose, without repining, that she may tend to the wants of her restless infant; thus an affectionate father labours with pleasure, for the support and education of his children; and, thus, with every testimony

of joy, the primitive Christians relieved and supported one another. The admirable effects produced by this unfeigned love, are described by St. Luke, in the following terms:—‘The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but (losing sight of every self-interesting view) they had all things in common.’

‘The most powerful motives employed by the Apostle Paul, in urging to the practice of Christian charity, are the love of God, and the compassion of Christ. ‘God saith he, ‘commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;’ and ‘ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich.’ Now whoever is sensible of the power, and tastes the sweetness, of these two grand truths, feels himself at the same time carried to every good work, in the same manner as the miser is led to those actions which serve to increase his hoard. For ‘being saved by grace through faith’ in those very truths, ‘we are created by Christ Jesus unto good works;’ ‘who gave himself for us,’ on this sole account, ‘that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ The consolatory doctrine of a gratuitous pardon offered to sinners, as a token of God’s unfathomable love, is another motive frequently made use of to the like purpose. ‘Put on,’ continues the same Apostle, ‘as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against



ny: Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.' Above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.' Yes, it not only covers the sins of others, by considering their doubtful actions in the most favourable point of view, and by overlooking the most unpardonable of their failings; but may, in some measure, be said to cover our own offences, since God, for Christ's sake, has promised to overlook our transgressions, as we give proof of forgiving temper toward our brethren. Discord entered into the world by sin. Hence we see unregenerate men not only separated from God, but divided among themselves: And hence, by the rebellion of his growing passions against his enfeebled reason, every unrighteous man is at war with himself. Dreadful as these evils are, we are here presented with a perfect remedy for them all. He, who created man upright, hath sent his Son to re-establish harmony in the world, to reduce our passions under the dominion of universal benevolence, to subject our reason to the authority of truth, and to subdue the whole man under the sweet yoke of charity manifested in the flesh—that charity, which is destined to reign for ever, and whose happy empire is called the kingdom of heaven.' 'The Father of glory,' says St. Paul, 'hath put all things under the feet of Christ, and hath given Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.' 'Ye, who sometimes were far off, are now made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace' between Jews and Gentiles, between man and man, 'who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, that He might reconcile both unto God in our body, by the cross, having slain the enmity' by that perfect charity of which

He gave so many wonderful proofs. 'Now, therefore we, who are actuated by the same spirit of love, ' and no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God ; and built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : In whom also ye are built together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit of charity.

' The minister who feels the force of these constraining motives, cannot fail to place them continually before his hearers. The various parts of his public discourse are as naturally inclined to this grand point, as the several parts of a solid edifice mutually rest upon the common foundation. ' There is one body,' saith he, with the Apostle, ' and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ' As we have many members in one body, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one member of another. Let love be, therefore, without dissimulation : Be kindly-affectioned one to another, with brotherly love ; in honour, preferring one another. Rejoice with them that do rejoice ; and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil ; but overcome evil with good.' In a word, ' Let all things be done with charity.'

' The evangelical pastor points out the excellence of charity, and urges every motive that can lead to the practice of it, till worldly men are constrained to cry out

with all the admiration of the ancient heathens, "see how these Christians love one another!" Lucian, indeed, could look with ridicule upon the zeal with which the primitive Christians succoured one another: "For," says he, "their legislator has made them believe that they are all brethren; and, hence they have all things common among them, despising even death itself, through the hope of immortality." The good pastor, however, is anxious to do that which this heathen writer was impious enough to censure in Christ. He admonishes believers to address the Almighty, as their common parent; conscious, that so soon as they receive power to cry, "Abba," that is, Father, by the holy Spirit, they will necessarily forget every scrupulous distinction between mine and thine, and put up, with unfeigned sincerity, that universal prayer, 'Give us this day, our daily bread.' This petition is commonly used by every member of our degenerate church, while their hearts are comparatively insensible to the wants of their necessitous brethren. But, were the love of ancient days to revive among us, we should not only solicit common blessings from above, but rejoice to share them with each other, as brethren partake of a repast provided for them at the table of their common parent.

'Happy days! when the Gospel of Christ was seen to flourish in the earth. Surely that sacred season might, with propriety, be termed the golden age of the church. O that we could recall the felicity we have forfeited, and see the joys of unanimity restored to a distracted world!

'In the meanwhile, let those who are hastening, by their prayers, this desirable revolution, be careful to preserve in their own hearts, those sparks of charity

which shall one day kindle the universe into a sacred flame. And let the ministers of the Gospel make constant display of those evangelical truths which were formerly sufficient to light up this glorious fire ; that by stirring up the dying embers of grace, the little light which still remains in the church, may be preserved from total extinction.'

And certainly this is the principle possessed by every soul that is truly converted to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is no true Christianity without it. 'The office of the Holy Ghost answers the part which the Father and the Son bear in our redemption. When we receive Him according to the promise of the Father, we receive Him as the Spirit of love :—He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He testifies to us the love of Christ ; and his fruit in our hearts and lives, is 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness.' This loving spirit is so essential to Christianity, that, if you ask St. Paul and St. John an account of their religion, the former answers :—'The end of Christianity is 'charity out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. And, therefore, if any Christian loveth not the Lord Jesus in his person, and in his mystical members, he is accursed. Maranatha, the Lord cometh to cut in sunder that wicked servant, and to appoint him his portion with hypocrites in outer darkness. As for St. John, he thus describes Christianity :—'Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God ; every one that loveth is born of God. We love Him, because He first loved us. And every one that loveth God, who begat believers, loveth them also that are begotten of Him. And the commandment we have from Him : that he who love

God, loves his brother also.' St. James's testimony to the religion of love, will properly close that of St. Paul and St. John. 'Harken, my beloved brethren. If ye fulfil the royal law, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if you have respect to persons, much more if you bite and devour your brethren, 'ye are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law (of love) and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' He shows himself a bad Christian, a fallen believer. Therefore, 'speak not evil one of another, brethren, nor grudge one against another, lest ye be condemned; behold the judge standeth at the door.' And Christ, the judge, confirms thus the testimony of his Apostles, in his awful account of the day of judgment. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for ye were kind and loving to me. 'The head of every man is Christ,' and therefore, inasmuch as ye have done it (that is, inasmuch as ye have been kind and loving), unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Ye have been kind and loving to me. And I will give you 'the reward of the inheritance. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed.' For ye were not kind and loving to Me. And, if they plead, "Not Guilty," to the charge, he will 'answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me;' that is, inasmuch as ye were not kind to one of these, ye were not kind and loving to Me. And these unloving men 'shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous (that is, the loving and merciful) into life eternal.' How plain is this religion! and how deplorable is it that

it should be almost lost in clouds of vain notions, wild opinions, unscriptural systems, empty professions, and noisy contentions! Were professors to embrace this practical Christianity, what a revolution would take place in Christendom! The accusers of the brethren would fall as lightning from heaven, and genuine orthodoxy would combine with humble charity, to make the earth a paradise again.'

And what will it avail us to embrace any thing short of this? What signifies all we know, all we do, all we suffer, if this kind and loving principle does not pervade the whole of our lives?

'Instead of continuing to give avowed infidels such room to laugh at us and our religion, would it not become us to stop, by a speedy reconciliation, the offence given by our absurd debates? Should we feel less concern for the honour of Christianity than Sir Robert Walpole did for the honour of the crown. It is reported, that when he stood at the helm of the British empire, he was abused in parliament by some members of the privy council. Soon after, meeting with them in the king's cabinet, he proceeded to the dispatch of business with his usual freedom, and with a remarkable degree of courtesy toward his enemies. And, being asked how he could do so, he replied, "The King's business requires union. Why should my master's affairs suffer loss by the private quarrels of his servants?" May the 'time' soon 'come,' when the 'servants' of the King of Peace shall have as much regard for His interest, as that minister showed for the interest of his royal master! Do not circumstances loudly call upon us to unite, in order to make head against the enemy of Christ and our souls? An enemy terrible as the banded powers of

earth and hell, headed by the prince of the air, whose name is 'Abaddon—Apollyon—Destroyer?'

'Our Lord bids us 'agree quickly with our adversaries;' and shall we for ever dispute with our friends? Joseph said to his brethren, 'See that ye fall not out by the way;' and, so far as we know, his direction was faithfully observed. Christ says to us, Wear my badge, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' And shall we still fall out in the way to heaven, and exchange the Christian badge of charity for the satanic badge of contention?'

And who is called to make a bolder stand against sin than the people called Methodists? If faithful to their profession, they give no quarter to sin. This is the peculiar characteristic of Wesleyan Methodism. A full salvation from inward, as well as outward sin. 'This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, and, for the sake of propagating this chiefly, he appears to have raised us up;' is a truth that cannot be too often repeated, and never should be lost sight of. As a neglect of this doctrine (which embraces all Christian doctrine) would be a certain way to incur God's displeasure.

It is quite absurd to expect that the work of God will go vigorously forward, unless we are going on unto perfection. Let men say what they will, what can they say against it? The question is not merely, do men believe it? Many Methodists (so called) believed it, but it does not profit them, they make no advances towards it. The question is, Do men desire it? Do they hate sin? Are they athirst for holiness of heart? Forgetting the things that are behind, and striving to enter in. For, after all, this is the main point. What else



will do? What are sects and parties in the sight of God? Nay, what are they in the sight of men? Strip them of their peculiarities, which constitute their silly differences, and what will remain but an individual condition and character; naked before the eye of that God who says, ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy?’

Now, if the Lord has wrought in us the earnest desire for the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace, then, Wesleyan Methodism to us is precious. Precious, because she proclaims the presence, the freeness, and the fulness of that great salvation wrought out for us by Jesus Christ; a deliverance from sin, and a fulness and perfection of love, to be enjoyed here; and with line upon line, and precept upon precept, directs the earnest soul to go up and possess the promised land. And, not only so; but there are the witnesses who have adorned her community,—the excellent of the earth. They breathed the free air of Wesleyan Methodism,—not shackled by prejudice,—honoured the Lord by believing in his love, and proved the record true. And their lives bore testimony to the truth of their profession; and, though they are dead, yet do they speak, by their writings, to the great encouragement, edification, and spiritual profit, of all those who have attained, or sincerely desire to attain, the crown of perfect love. And the Lord fulfilled in them his gracious promise:—‘Them that honour me I will honour;’ for He used them as instruments to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and diffuse vital Christianity upon the earth, in a manner and to an extent that He has not any other body of persons in modern times. Now, all this is very precious to those who are giving all diligence in the concern of their souls; they believe

that those that excelled in virtue, and adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, have borne faithful testimony to the truth; and believing there is no respect of persons with God, their desires are excited, their faith increased, and they exclaim, in the language of the poet, 'Rejoice in hope, rejoice with me; we shall from all our sins be free.' Now, to what section of the Christian church shall we go for this glorious Gospel of the blessed God, but to Wesleyan Methodism?

In order to the revival of religion, Mr. Wesley recommends preaching Christian perfection. No doubt it was the principal point with him; and those whom he knew enjoyed it, he esteemed the most. Mr. Fletcher's 'eminent gift appeared to be in the earnestness and success with which he pressed believers "to go on unto perfection." To this point his exhortations and advice almost continually tended. His own soul was ever athirst for the full salvation of God, and to see it exemplified in others, that they might possess the whole mind that was in Jesus Christ, be fully renewed in the spirit of their minds, and have their hearts full, their graces full, overflowing with love to God and man, was the ultimate and main endeavour of all his ministerial labours.' And it has been, and is now, the chief theme, the chief joy, the chief glory in Christ, with all who have fully embraced Wesleyan Methodism. To be wholly delivered now from the power and pollution of sin, is to be made free indeed, and to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. And, no one who hates sin, and desires to be free from its thralldom, will speak against this doctrine; however it may be exploded by

some of the people called Methodists. And, it is no deviating from the truth to say, that the man who is truly and properly a Wesleyan Methodist minister either has attained to the blessing of Christian perfection, or, he is in earnest and diligent pursuit of it; and consequently, will recommend it with all his might. If a minister is not so engaged, which is but his reasonable service, then he is engaged in something else, and that something else is not furthering, but obstructing and counter-working the machinery of Methodism, however laudable his pursuits may appear in the sight of men. For, just in proportion as he falls short of this omnipotent love, so does he fail in the amount of profitable influence he carries with him wherever he goes.

I cannot conceive how men can hold fast their confidence without going on unto perfection. I appeal to all who understand it. Examine the generality of professors, as to whether they are living in the enjoyment of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin. If not, what then do they enjoy? For they appear cheerful and gay, in no bondage, free to general conversation, &c. O, they have the faith of reliance and they enjoy the hope, that, when they go hence, the Lord Jesus will save them from the wages of sin; but they are not at all expecting to be saved from sin now. Is this the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Unspeakably great are the blessings of justification; yea, it is an unspeakable mercy to have the least light and disposition to seek the salvation of our souls. We would not undervalue the mercies of God, seeing we are not worthy the least of them. But it is absolutely necessary that all differences, even in doctrine, should

banished from the church, in order that the world may believe and be converted. 'The men of the world will never be prevailed upon, cordially, to believe in Christ, till they see the generality of professors 'made perfect in one,' by agreeing in doctrine, and 'walking in love.' We may infer this from our Lord's prayer for His church:—'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may BE ONE, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE.' Christ intimates, in these words, the men of the world will never generally embrace the Gospel, till the union He prayed for takes place among believers. To keep up divisions, therefore, is one of the most effectual methods to hinder the conversion of sinners, and strengthen the unbelief which hardens their hearts. And these divisions will ever be kept up upon one ground or another, until the doctrine of Christian perfection, or perfect love, is generally received and enjoyed by the church. The doctrine is based upon a foundation sure and steadfast; and all the laboured efforts of men to shake that foundation are vain; while men are engaged in the attempt they know not what they do, any more than those know what they say, when they so often repeat 'Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.'

Very much have been done to establish union as Christian brethren. Parties irreconcilable to one another, as to doctrine, &c. have met on platforms, and elsewhere, and endeavoured to show their tolerance, liberal mind, and forbearance. All which, in the estimation of worldly wisdom, is very proper, very agreeable, quite as it should be. But test it by the

wisdom that cometh from above. Could they agree together touching the kingdom of Christ fully set up the heart? Agree to go together to the throne of grace to obtain a present deliverance from all sin, to realize the fulfilment of God's ancient promise, 'That I would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life?' Is not this the grand object of their pursuit? If it is, why do they not agree? If not, what then are they seeking? Is this very proper? Quite as it should be? It is unreasonable to suppose for a moment, that God will abate anything of an entire surrender of ourselves all to Him; or, that we can render that obedience to Him which He requires, without we are thus delivered. And, to conceal the promise of that cardinal blessing, so that we may not raise disputes, or give offence, appears, upon consideration, a very singular way of seeking the fellowship of saints, and promoting the work of the Redeemer,—the sum of which is perfect love filling our hearts.

From the testimony of a cloud of witnesses, it is evident that the Wesleyan Methodists, as a people, are standing for the defence of this doctrine. If we do not defend it, who will? If we do not defend it with our might, what will become of it? And what may we expect at the hands of the Lord for our unfaithfulness?

If we were all thus engaged, striving together for the faith once delivered to the saints, provoking one another to love and good works; minor matters would be kept in their proper place, and there would be no place for disputings. For 'No one can, properly speaking, be the antagonist of love, spiritual joy, holiness, and t

ected image of God. These high blessings may be subject of hatred, derision, sarcasm, and ignorant tempt. But no faction can organise itself in hostile way against these graces, as such. How can evil making be indulged, when the heart is filled with e, and the lips with praise? What place can be nd for light conversation, when the soul is absorbed the great and weighty subjects of religion and rnity, the terrible dangers in which wicked men are ng, and the urgent necessity of extending the king- n of God? Then, as to party divisions, by what tle machinations can either Satan, the original hor of these evils, or the inflated ambition and pride his agents in the churches, find any scope for the rcise of their vocation, when all are influenced by a us care for each other, and a glowing zeal for the ry of the Lord? There is nothing in Christianity ch can either gratify or tolerate the evils referred

Their indulgence is not merely a violation of the ce and happiness of social religion, but a sin against gion itself, or rather against God, its author?

If we were thus engaged! Why? Shall we not? at else shall we do, brethren? Do not our ministers they are willing, with open arms, to receive you; t they would rejoice at your return? Nay, do you hear them entreat you, beseech you in the name of rist?

Hark! We greatly long after you all, in the bowels Jesus Christ. You are in our hearts to die and live n you. For what should be our hope, or joy, or wn of rejoicing, should not even ye, in the presence our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Ye should our glory and joy. For ye are our spiritual children.

And we pray God Almighty give us mercy in your sight, in our attempt to bring you back to the embrace of your fathers and brethren. For, if we are bereaved of our children, we are bereaved. We would use every means, and become all things to you, so that we may gain your christian regards and confidence. We do not scruple to do this, when we remember that the Lord's life and glory condescends (without any effort, or exertion on our part) to draw, woo, and even 'stand at the door and knock,' to gain our worthless hearts. And it will becometh us to be followers of God as dear children. Come, then, dear brethren, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant to fulfil his endearing laws of love. 'Come, and let us,' as Wesley says, 'magnify the Lord together, and labour to promote his kingdom upon earth. Let us join heart and hands in this blessed work, in striving to bring glory to God in the highest, by establishing peace and goodwill among men, to the uttermost of our power. For let our hearts be joined herein: let us unite our wishes and prayers: let our whole soul pant after a general revival of pure religion and undefiled, a restoration of the image of God, pure love, in every child of man. Then let us endeavour to promote, at our several stations, this scriptural, primitive religion: let us with all diligence diffuse the religion of the gospel among all we have any intercourse with: let us exhort and exhort all men, not to enmity and contention, but to peace and good works, always remembering those deep words (God engrave them on all our hearts!) 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God is in him.'

We acknowledge our defects. Probably we may



ly chargeable as being the principal cause of the present unhappy state of things among us. We fear we have not lived so close to God ourselves, as we ought to have done ; consequently we have not laboured to carry out the system of Methodism, as left us by Wesley ; and to which he exhorted our elder brethren and fathers. To which, indeed, they pledged themselves after his death. We have not maintained the spirit, preached the doctrines, or applied the discipline of Wesleyan Methodism in the manner we ought to have done. We have been very lax in all this, and, in consequence, the necessity arose for the adoption of measures, which, at least, appeared stringent (and gave offence to some), and which otherwise would have been unnecessary. We have not been so jealous for the purity of the Church, so mindful of your spiritual welfare, and so attentive to your rising families as we should have been : we have been occupied in another direction. Forgive us this wrong. We will, by the help of the Lord, endeavour to return to the first principles of good old Wesleyan Methodism. O come and help us, and pray for us. We would not fail to ask an interest in your prayers, but, like St. Paul, who, ‘ penetrated with a deep sense of his unworthiness and insufficiency, after importing for himself the gracious assistance of God, he humbly solicits the prayers of all the faithful :— Brethren, pray for us. I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the spirit, that ye strive together in your prayers for me. Pray for all saints ; and for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an

ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak bold as I ought to speak.'

We admit that it is our duty to imitate St. Paul well as we can, we would allude particularly to visiting from house to house. No plea about our studies, the like, should keep us from this. If we are astonished, we are rebuked; that ministers of learning, and as much devoted to study as any of us have nevertheless visited their people. And heaven forbid! that we should insult any of our people, wound their feelings, by supposing for a moment, that they would estimate our visits and our prayers as nothing, or worse than nothing, unless we left them a little silver. The Lord keep us from such degraded and destructive sentiments. No, dear brethren, we want no pecuniary aid from you for this purpose; as though sixpence was the wonted blessing we were to leave behind. Alas! we want more faith, more love, more of the Spirit of Christ; then would we teach from house to house and be no strangers to the compassion that constrained the Apostle, to warn men night and day, even with tears: and never find visiting excessively disagreeable. If we go in a right spirit, and the people will willingly receive us, then, the blessing shall return upon ourselves; and, we think that would not be excessively disagreeable.

Do not have low or hard thoughts of us brethren though some of us have made much bombast about the pulpit. Pulpit work! Pulpit talents! Pulpit meetings! Pulpit preparations, &c. O the Pulpit! The Pulpit! The Lord forgive us our pulpit sins.—And, again, all excellent preaching! Great men! Great preaching!

ilities! Great preachers! Good preaching! Superior preaching! Calling some kind of preaching, off-hand, easy sort of preaching. The old jog-trot non-improvement system! Eminent preachers! Ministerial dignity and honour! Ministerial popularity, &c.—The Lord, in his infinite mercy, keep us from that popularity, which would prevent Him from using us as instruments, in extorting the cry in our congregations, what must we do to be saved; or to raise their Hallelujahs; lest we should be tempted to talk too much of our achievements, and glory in ourselves. What would become of us, and the cause of Christ, if this were the way he dealt with his faithful servants?—And some talk about feeling very cross, and crusty, to be forced away from their dear old books, and manuscripts, and pulpit preparations, and attempt to justify their grief and anger, by affirming, they seldom see Mr. Bookworm any where but in the pulpit!—And, again, about edifying variety! Intellectual preaching! O, the itching for the intellectual, to be blended with the spiritual and devotional parts of our sermons! What does it mean? The abblings of vain philosophy to assist the Holy Spirit to accomplish his gracious work? We believe that it is through the foolishness of preaching, that the souls of the rich and learned, as well as those of the poor and ignorant, are to be saved. That preaching, which is with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and not with the demonstration of mere human study and art.

Some have made a flourish about tramping lonely roads in dismal darkness, exposed to snow, rain, wind, terrible thunder, storms, &c.; as though it were a most wonderful display of courage and devotedness; such as

many would be very far from relishing; particularly when they took into account, the apprehension of ghosts and goblins, or robbers and assassins! Nay, we declare ourselves willing to spend, and be spent, so that we may but be instruments of good, and bring glory to Christ.—Jesu's smile is the light of heaven in the soul of all who sincerely love Him. 'His presence makes their paradise,' and no darkness is dismal to them. 'The righteous are as bold as a lion.'

Never have such low thoughts of us as to suppose that we make such a toy of our vocation, and have such an inordinate attachment to cordial friends, or that we feel any restless anxiety to deliver a large number, and a variety of sermons (which some may vaunt themselves upon having by them ready to their hand), or that a pecuniary matter, or any matter whatever, would cause our removal from one circuit to another, cruelly to lacerate our feelings, and render the March Quarter Day a day of horror, a day of distress and weeping to our families; a day on which we and our families feel most unrighteously degraded. And that the sight of the man employed in the attempt to remove us against our will, is as odious as that of a wild cannibal coming to eat up our flesh! We disdain it all, as disreputable. We rather desire to follow the example of that devoted man of God, Rev. Mr. Miller. "I (says he) engage myself no where; I go any where. And I trust I shall never vary. I see the wisdom of this resolution still clearer and clearer. Such little things may make the best circuits the worst, and the worst the best, that I say, 'Send but thy presence with me, O send me where thou wilt!' And as to our public character, or our private character, we are not anxiously careful about

that. The Lord will take care of our character if we love to Him, and study to please Him rather than men.

These things and the like have been said: And we mourn on account of it. We fear they are calculated to raise the indignation of some, even serious and sober-minded people, and lead them to look upon it all as uncalled-for prattle, the unsavory fume of some shallow mind; very little acquainted with the constraining power of Jesu's precious love. We would carefully avoid every appearance of trifling, and put from us all unrighteousness and hypocrisy. Do not wrong us, dear brethren, by having hard thoughts of us. We do confess, 'It is impossible to find a person, surrounded with more powerful motives to piety, than a man, whose ordinary occupation is to meditate upon religious things, to discourse of them among others, to reprove vice and hypocrisy, to perform divine service, to administer the holy sacraments, to visit the afflicted and the dying; and who must one day render to God an account of the souls committed to his charge.' We 'know not, whether it be possible to find any stronger marks of impiety and hypocrisy, than those which may be discovered in the character of a person, who, in the midst of all these favourable circumstances, is, nevertheless, an unrighteous man. Such a one may be said to divert himself with the most sacred things of religion, and to spend the whole of his life in performing the part of an impostor. And this he does to his cost; since there is no profession in the world, that will more effectually procure a sentence of condemnation than that of the priesthood, when exercised in so unfaithful a manner.'

Therefore, we renounce all claim to what may be

termed our rights, dignity, power, &c.; upon any other grounds than by making full proof of our ministry. We are satisfied that the New Testament contains ample directions, clear and unquestionable, as to the duty of both ministers and people. Upon that authority we find that the minister is to rule as well as to teach and the people are to obey and to esteem ministers highly in love for their work's sake: But their work must be entirely of that description, to which such high esteem is due. To write a volume, in order to assert our claims by legal references, historical quotations, logical disputations, &c., is only beating the air in such a case as this. A holy life of self-denial, that will commend itself to every man's conscience in the signature of God: This, and only this, is the powerful argument that will put to silence the gainsayers, and stop the mouth of slander. If we fail in having this argument to offer; then there is great cause for humiliation, and our place is in the dust. We know of no justification for such defects.

Nothing can be more absurd, than for a man bearing the sacred designation of minister of the Gospel, to expect reverence, esteem, and, consequently, obedience if he lives luxuriously, in indolence, extravagance, fashionable appearance, pompous manner, or accumulating wealth, &c. Everybody knows sufficiently clearly (who knows how to judge at all of the Christian character), to condemn all this, especially in a Methodist minister; he above all men, must expect to be blamed if found under such circumstances. Nay, he will be looked upon with contempt as a despicable character. The men of the world, in their publications have often exposed to ridicule the inconsistency of the

men who try to mix up the religion of the Lord Jesus with the spirit of the world.

You see, brethren, we do not wish to excuse ourselves, or exalt ourselves, as though we would lord it over you. We feel quite sensible that even the titles of Rev. or Dr., or any such titles that may be conferred upon man, alter not the nature of things, and are as nought in the sight of God, and worse than that when they are the occasion of any degree of pride.

Nevertheless, while we would with tears of Christian love again beseech you, by the mercies of God, to return to your former position in connection with us, and be forever reconciled. And although we have disagreed, and in a manner which, no doubt, is considered by some a quarrel; and we desire, as Christ hath forgiven us, we may forgive one another. Yet we can do nothing against the truth; we can submit to nothing that is contrary to Wesleyan Methodism; not because we are legally prevented, but because we are bound to love and honour the cause that God has so abundantly owned and blessed. And you, dear brethren, have been called under the old system, enjoyed your Christian experience, and have been made useful under it. We are sorry you are turned to another; and we beg you to remember that, whatever you complain of, you have not been deprived in any degree of the all-important privileges of Methodism. The local preachers have perfect liberty to go forth into every open door, not excepting the high-ways, &c. (where it would not interfere with the law of the land), and preach all the doctrines of Wesleyan Methodism with all the vigour they possess. The class-leaders have the liberty of teaching Methodism, and applying its discipline in their classes with all fidelity.



And as to the Stewards, we are quite in their hands. If they think the houses they have provided for us too expensive, let them make the proper alteration. The furniture that we use is not our own,—if any is considered superfluous, let it be removed. We pray as long for the revival of that gracious spirit, described by Mrs. Rogers, in a letter from Dublin, to Mr. Fletcher:—“Another great blessing,” says she, “is, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Blair (his fellow-labourer), are united as the heart of one man: Mrs. Blair also is a sister indeed to me, in spirit and real affection, so that we are a family of love, and one small house serves us all. And not the preachers only, but the stewards, leaders, and people unite, and have only one strife—how they may best promote each others happiness, and the cause of God.”

And as to the office-bearers generally, they have the full power to choose or refuse any one proposed as a candidate for the ministry. Conference has not meddled with all this; and many other such parts of Methodism neither indeed wish, but to do all in harmony with the general welfare.

We at once declare, that if there is in the conference any self-seeking—any undue partiality or favour manifested by a party spirit—any self-will and obstinacy exhibited by wrangling or contention, and refusal to submit one to another—any aiming at pre-eminence—any hard speeches, disrespectful remarks, cutting reproofs, with criminations and recriminations—any hard thoughts and low estimates entertained of each other, and allowed to rankle in the breast for want of love and faithfulness to tell it out. If we have not a single eye, to think, speak, and do all to the glory of God in the prosperity of his cause, then, we do not, i

in all-important sense, constitute a Wesleyan Methodist conference, for just in proportion as we fall short of these essentials, we counterwork the machinery of Methodism.

We wish our lives to be open to the world, and, therefore, we scruple not to invite any of our people kindly to tell us if we fail in maintaining the Christian character.

But with all we must not hesitate to declare, that we do not even think, that Mr. Wesley, in all his government, exceeded the bounds of authority belonging to every faithful minister of the church of Christ; but that he, as in the sight of God, did no more than what he considered he was bound to do, in order to fulfil his charge with fidelity, and finish his course with joy. Therefore, we cannot look upon any one as a hearty friend of Wesleyan Methodism who would indulge in depreciating his judgments, not because we want to exalt him above measure, God knoweth. But we would be very cautious of trifling with the sentiments of those whom the Lord so highly honoureth. We are even inclined to think, that if we could attain to the honour put upon Mr. Wesley as an instrument of good, we could be satisfied. But at least, until then we ought not to treat any thing he has said as preposterous, especially with regard to preaching and the care of the churches. Mr. Wesley was a wise man as well as a good man—a man of long and extensive experience, and one who soberly thought before he spoke: and who, upon the verge of rendering his final account, could, with confidence, say, “Do all things with a single eye as I have done from the beginning.”

Finally, brethren, we seek not yours, but you; to this

end we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.

And will you not brethren, reply to this address ; this christian appeal? May I not with cheerful confidence anticipate your response ?

We heartily receive your invitation, and will sincerely join with you as followers of God. We will not upbraid for God upbraideth not. We have been too precipitate we have made a loud cry about our liberty ; The People ; The People's rights, &c. We have called it our cause : forgetting too much that it was the cause of Christ. We have taken up the unhallowed weapon of slander and reproach ; instead of betaking ourselves to prayer, in reference to anything we might have supposed to be wrong in the Church. We have shown the littleness of our faith, by attaching such importance and power to the Conference, instead of looking to the Head of the Church to undertake for us. We have made it too much a secular affair ; in a great measure lost sight of the spiritual interests of the Society, and the world at large. We are far from saying we are faultless, but we acknowledge with unfeigned humility that we have not always adorned Wesleyan Methodism. Many of us have borne the name of Wesleyan Methodists for many years, but have not always lived worthy of the name : as local preachers, stewards, leaders, or as private members. As local preachers, we cannot, in truth say, we never lost sight (in the desire to please) of the end of preaching. Never sought the habitations of the affluent in preference to those of the poor. Cannot say we have been always faithful in being no respecter of persons, warning, admonishing, correcting, high and low, rich and poor, with all fidelity

Giving all diligence to set an example to the Church, by an invariable attention in all the means of grace ; an example to the world by an exemplary life. As leaders, we dare not say we have never neglected our classes. We dare not call the Lord to witness, that with unwearied scrupulosity we have attended to those committed to our care ; never neglecting to visit our absent members. Teaching the doctrines, applying the discipline, and religiously cautious who we recommended to become new members. Being an example to the flock in all things, as a Wesleyan Methodist. As stewards, we must acknowledge, we have not universally set a wise and amiable example, but we fear we have, though with kind intention, unthinkingly laid a snare, by the houses we have taken for your accommodation ; and by the manner in which we have furnished them. And altogether, as office-bearers, we have not always attended the leaders' meetings, prayer meetings, and every branch of our duty with assiduity. As members in general, we have not kept close to the golden rule. But have canvassed the character and conduct of the ministers and others, and made them the subject of our every day gossip. Many similar defects might be mentioned ; and, alas ! who among us will say I am blameless.

We sincerely declare that we do not wish to badger or browbeat you, as poor fellows standing at your desks, performing the drudgery of book-keeping, &c. We wish to esteem you according to your profession, as ambassadors of Christ, sent to stand between the dead and the living.

We quite agree with your view of the New Testament authority with regard to the ministers of the

Gospel, such as you describe. They will not deserve respect and obedience, but will command. The more a minister of the Gospel exemplifies in life, the character of our adorable Lord, the more the true disciples esteem him, until he will have reason to bear testimony of their love, similar to that of Paul towards the Galatians, That if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him. We do not hesitate to say that none who enjoy the love of God in their hearts will dispute the right of such ministers to rule, or scruple cheerfully to obey.

We do not want to make an uproar for a solidly constructive, interesting, and attractive variety of courses, to arrest, detain, (and what some would call profit, and if possible, delight our attention; under the assumption that we compose intellectual congregations. Our growing intelligence and discrimination of the truth as it is in Jesus, never lead us to demand or expect whatever the taste of the age may do. Neither do we wish to despise or reject your visits. But we wish to see you in our habitations, mingling with us as fathers and brethren, sympathising with us in our joys and sorrows; admonishing, exhorting—nay, and using sharpness if needs be, according to the grace given unto you; and we wish you to do this willingly, and not consider that your reputation, and pecuniary allowances are so much in our hands, and that we are exercising such power over you, that you must concede anything and that yield you must. That would be mercenary. Dear Sirs, if you do not do it for Christ's sake and the love of souls, what is the use of your doing it at all?

We do not wish to keep you from your books, and to

attainment of every knowledge necessary to your usefulness, while we have evidence that you count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. But as we are jealous for your reputation, we beg leave to say, that if you should ever read anything about Pecksniff, and the like, do not tell it to the world, or they will be apt to think, and perhaps to say, that your delight is not in the Law of the Lord, and that you do not meditate therein day and night.

We have no desire ourselves to harbour anything in the shape of suspicion without the clearest grounds. Until we do confess that we have been somewhat excited at times, when we have heard statements which implied some under-hand anti-christian plots, and secret machinations, the exposure of which would be almost as alarming as an earthquake; and create a terror almost like the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and make our hair stand on end. But, however, we leave it to you, as conscientious men, to explain. For we feel quite subdued by your frank and christian declaration respecting what some have unadvisedly said about the state of things, and we trust that the manner in which you have expressed yourselves upon the subject, will have the happy effect of averting the evil which might otherwise arise. We certainly do request you not to call us whisperers, head-shakers, eye-winkers, capable of filling the minds of whimsical stewards with dark notions against some good man. And also that you would not call some circuits inferior, and remarkable for itching ears; and then try to scratch them on account of it! Dear Sirs, do not have unworthy thoughts of us, we wish to be candid in all our conduct, and show our religion by labouring to do good unto all men. We

have no idea how a man can be a christian, and at the same time an enemy to the cause of Christ, and an enemy to the public. ‘He that is not with me, is against me, saith the Lord.’ Neither have we any idea of a pugnacious Saint! It is written, ‘The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men. And Saints, we suppose, are the servants of the Lord. And we leave it to your kind consideration and good judgment as to whether you think such trifling would be conducive to a happy reconciliation.

With the help of the Lord, we intend to turn our attention more diligently to the practical understanding and enjoyment of the spirit, the doctrines, and discipline of original Wesleyan Methodism. ‘It is painful to reflect how long a pernicious leaven, once deposited in religious societies, or particular places, continues to ferment. This fact, however, would be (comparatively) unimportant, were it not for the bitter consequences; these are distressing to contemplate. Animosities taken up by offended parties, infused into their children, propagated as a kind of principle, and taught as an unquestionable duty which the public ought to adopt, become extremely injurious to the people themselves, and to unknown generations.’ If we continue to bite and devour one another, we have no ground to expect anything less than that we be consumed one of another.

‘Not to be reconciled, when we properly may, is to keep up divisions; and, to keep up divisions, is as bad as to cause them.’ And we would banish the notion that a reconciliation is impossible. We ‘hope, it appears, that whether we consider the earnest entreaties of the Apostles—their conflicts and pious wishes for their converts—the wisdom of our Lord’s address to his



Father, for the union of believers—the repeated commands of the Gospel to be of ‘one mind and one judgment;’—the promises which God has made to help us to keep these commands; the divine power by which the primitive believers were actually enabled to keep them, so long as they walked in the Spirit, or whether we consider the end of evangelical preaching and the unity and growth of Christ’s mystical body; nothing can be more unscriptural than to say that (all true) believers can never be again of one heart and of one mind. Such sentiments are contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

‘And as this notion is unscriptural, so it is irrational, inasmuch as it supposes that the children of God can never agree to serve him, as the children of the wicked one do to honour their master. St. John informs us, that ‘These have one mind to give their power and strength unto the beast.’ And experience daily teaches that when the men of the world are embarked in the same scheme, they can perfectly agree in pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and fame, or in the performance of duty.’ And we, who are of one creed, if we are not one in heart and mind, there must be something wrong in spirit.

Dear Sirs, we heartily embrace your affectionate proposal. And we unhesitatingly declare that we are so sensibly convinced of the necessity of a reunion as Christian brethren. And that, for men possessing godliness, to live at variance, is so contrary to the design of the Gospel, altogether so opposed to the Spirit of Christianity. And that one of the greatest blessings to be enjoyed in this life, is the spiritual union and fellowship of those who love the Lord Jesus. We are so convinced of these things, that we shall look upon those who

will not fully engage in promoting so desirable an end, whether they be ministers or members, as unworthy to bear the honourable name of Wesleyan Methodist. This we will do, that such persons may go out from us, that it may plainly appear that they are not of us.

In conclusion, we beg to submit to your consideration, the propriety of calling a meeting in each circuit, at one and the same time, of all the ministers and officer-bearers throughout the connection, for the purpose of a general humiliation before God, to confess our faults one to another, and pray for one another, that the breach may be healed ; and also as an invitation to all amongst us that are willing to return, and as you say, be restored to their former position.

Waiting your decision with regard to this, our suggestion, we humbly pray, that the Lord would further us with His blessing, unite us in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship, as with a threefold cord, not to be broken.

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